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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LEGEND AND MYTH IN LEYENDAS DE GUATEMALA

by

(C) ALFRED A. FRASER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled LEGEND AND MYTH IN LEYENDAS DE GUATEMALA submitted by Alfred A. Fraser in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Hispanic Literatures

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A B S T R A C T

In Leyendas de Guatemala, Miguel Angel Asturias establishes the Amerindian heritage of Middle America as a valid theme for literature. However, the lack of extensive critical works on his first artistic publication, in spite of its acclaimed success, is a serious omission in the field of Spanish American literary criticism. The purpose of our thesis is therefore to give an appreciation of Leyendas de Guatemala by exploring some of the elements upon which the author, a Nobel Prize winner for literature, based his art in the first of his literary works.

Our method in pursuing this goal is to focus individually on legend and myth in the text. However, as a preliminary step, we examine the overall composition of the text in order to establish the nature of legend and myth, and to distinguish between the functions they perform.

Legend is selected as one aspect of our analysis, not only because the book consists of a combination of various folk tales, but also because it permits an examination of the author's style and an understanding of the process whereby historical events, incorporated with religious beliefs and beliefs in the supernatural, are idealized and transformed into legend. This analysis of the process by which legend is formed is undertaken by focusing on the pre-Columbian and surrealist influences in the style of Asturias in Leyendas de Guatemala.

Myth is the second major topic discussed because the tales abound with numberous mythological allusions. We explain them so that the stories can be appreciated more fully, but, instead of merely cataloguing the myths, we introduce the problem of their survival. A more profound analysis of myth is therefore permitted, and the cohesion of the whole work is further revealed by tracing throughout the text an

acculturation process perceived in a gradual evolution of Maya-Quiché myth from one group of tales to the next.

Each of the analyses of composition, of legend and of myth, highlights a different aspect of the art in Leyendas de Guatemala. Collectively, they demonstrate that that art form was created using the country's past as theme, and following techniques that were also favoured in pre-Columbian Guatemala. At the same time, the influence of Europe in shaping both theme and technique is adequately recognized.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

I would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Richard Young for supervising this thesis, for his painstaking help and valuable suggestions. My thanks also go to Miss Lynda Watson, Mrs. Khan and Miss Eleanor McSheffrey for their secretarial services. Finally, I wish to express deep gratitude to those whose moral support enabled me to complete this exercise, and to the many people who may have contributed to the development of these ideas, including my dear departed Mother to whom I dedicate these pages.

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INTRODUCTION

Leyendas de Guatemala, published in Madrid in 1930,[1] is the first work of fiction by Miguel Angel Asturias, the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1967, but whatever its relative importance as his first work, the amount of critical attention it has attracted is surprisingly small. Although numerous reviews of the book exist, critical appraisals usually appear only as introductory material to a discussion of his more recent and more popular works.[2] Born in 1899, by 1930 Asturias had already been exposed to political dictatorship, capitalistic exploitation, and his country's pre-Columbian heritage, topics which together constitute a great part of his literary appeal. His experiences stem from two major periods in his life. His formative years in Guatemala included a period of political refuge from the capital when he became acquainted with rural Guatemala, and subsequently wrote a thesis entitled "Sociología guatemalteca. El problema social del indio".[3] Later, in France (1924 to 1933), his awakened interest in the cultural heritage and the social and political problems of his country led him to his studies of the religions of ancient Middle America under the tutelage of George Raynaud, a prominent authority on the Mayans, and to his subsequent participation in the translation into Spanish of two of his tutor's works.[4] While studying in France, Asturias also became acquainted with prominent contemporary artists and writers of both Europe and Spanish America, and consequently came to discover the latest literary trends, including French surrealism.[5] Asturias' mestizo origin, enhanced by formative influences on him, his training and his interests, determine the foundations of his literary work, which is based on a cultural multiplicity that combines both European and American elements.

When, therefore, Leyendas de Guatemala first appeared, it was principally this combination, including the religious beliefs and the perennial folk tales of America, which drew the attention of the foremost critics.

The subject matter of Leyendas de Guatemala is derived from the two principal sources of Guatemala's cultural heritage. On the one hand are the indigenous peoples who still speak pre-Columbian languages, and who have preserved some of the traditions and customs of pre-Columbian civilization; on the other are the "Ladinos", whose language is Spanish and whose culture is derived mainly from Spain.[6] The cultural diversity presented in Leyendas de Guatemala is consequently a reflection of a process of acculturation initiated with the military and religious conquest of Middle America and the subsequent miscegenation between victors and vanquished. The greater emphasis of Asturias' work, however, falls upon Guatemala's indigenous culture, that derived from the Maya-Quiché civilization. His emphasis is a reflection, not only of his own interests, but also of certain trends discernible in the work undertaken in recent years by anthropologists and arqueologists. Here we are referring to works such as the appraisal of the achievements of Mayan civilization by Sylvanus Griswold Morley in his book The Ancient Maya,[7] and to the work of Rafael Girard, who was concerned with the documentation of vestiges of survival of that civilization among the Chorti Indians.[8] We refer also to a study by Gustavo Correa[9] and his discussion of the acculturation process showing how the Spanish expatriates of Colonial Guatemala attributed pejorative connotations to indigenous myths, causing many Indians and mestizos to abandon their pre-Columbian culture and attach themselves to the socially elite group. The purpose of these studies is both that of re-constructing the Mayan civilizations of the past and of establishing the extent

to which remnants from them have survived in the culture of the present. In this regard, the concerns of Wilson Harris, with respect to the Caribbean nations and the Guyanas, are equally applicable to Guatemala:

> We are all shaped by our past: the imperatives of a contemporary culture are predominantly those of a relationship to this past. Yet . . . we think and behave as though we have no past, no history, no culture. And where we come to take notice of our history, it is often in the light of biases adopted from one thoroughbred culture or another of the old world.[10]

The work of Miguel Angel Asturias can be seen in a context equivalent to that of the anthropologists. That is to say that he, too, is concerned with a just and accurate definition and description of his country's culture, a point in part substantiated by the way indigenous American culture had been treated in literature before him. In general terms, its treatment was dictated by preoccupations and interpretations derived from Europe. This was the opinion of Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, who appropriately entitled the first of his series of lectures examining the literary currents of Spanish America, "The discovery of the New World in the imagination of Europe".[11] The Europeanization of American literature generally prevailed throughout the Colonial period and the greater part of the nineteenth century, as if something in America had "compelled it to wait for a signal from its distant capital as to how things ought to be done".[12] In two studies on the treatment of the Indian theme and indigenous culture in Spanish-American literature, Aida Cometta Manzoni condemned the exploitation of the Indian in works where he was treated superficially as an exotic being, and idealized in an artificial past.[13] The cultural dispossession of the Indian was, then, a common feature in Spanish-American Literature, and one which, according to G.R. Coulthard, would undoubtedly have negative influences on the psychology of nationalism

in countries where it prevailed.[14] Only in drama have truly indigenous elements been constantly preserved. In Behind American Footlights, the view of U.K. Jones[15] is that the process of Americanization of the theatre is already complete, that the real psychology of the Indian, his traditions, his customs, and his tragic and unjust history are evident in the theatre, where music, dance, and adornment in ceremonial dress are unique and predominant characteristics. Indeed, there is a great similarity between "Cuculcán", the drama in Leyendas de Guatemala, and El Varón de Rabinal,[16] a pre-Columbian work which has survived as a model for contemporary American dramatists. The themes of indigenous legend and myth which appear among the main topics of Leyendas de Guatemala had, then, not previously received adequate treatment except in the theatre. One of the great values of Asturias' work is, consequently, to have captured the fantasy of the primordial Indian world and to have established it further as a fit subject for creative literature.[17] Indeed, having treated the subject in Leyendas de Guatemala, it became a central characteristic in all his major works, acquiring, according to a study by Richard Callan,[18] a universal significance.

In the ensuing discussion of the Leyendas de Guatemala, of Miguel Angel Asturias, we will present an analysis of aspects of the work that hitherto have not received attention in critical literature. At the same time, however, our analysis will indirectly reflect the value placed by Asturias on the pre-Columbian, Maya-Quiché traditions, and their survival in the culture of post-Conquest Guatemala. Moreover, it will be possible to demonstrate some of the techniques employed by Asturias in exploiting his country's indigenous culture in the composition of a work of imaginative literature. In order to achieve this

end, we will consider Leyendas de Guatemala from three points of view: its composition, aspects of legend, and the treatment of myth.

For the purpose of our discussion, in our first chapter we will divide the text into four units. These four units acknowledge Asturias' own divisions in the text, but also recognize the aesthetic unity of the book. The aim of this analysis is to establish and differentiate the role of legend and myth, and to assess how Guatemala, the country itself, is connected with the legend and the myth, as the title Leyendas de Guatemala suggests.

Since both terms legend and myth have many different meanings which sometimes overlap, it is necessary to define them for the purpose of our thesis. The term legend will refer to traditional folk tales, distorted or idealized narrations of historical, or supernatural events containing a nucleus of facts, and handed down orally from one generation to another.[19] Eventually, as occurs in Leyendas de Guatemala, these tales may be written down. Our interest in Chapter II therefore, focuses on the literary character which legend acquires, on the stylistic techniques and on the processes of image creation employed in the written folk tales. Thus, we will be particularly concerned with Asturias' use of a style derived partly from pre-Columbian writings, and partly from surrealist techniques. In order to adhere to our definition of legend, a second term, "leyenda", will be used in our text to refer to the literary genre or the complete story, such as might be employed, for example, to indicate the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, or the "leyendas" of the Duque de Rivas.[20]

When compared with legend, myth emphasizes the divine more, and so, acquires, to mythologists such as Mircea Eliade, the status

of "sacred history", and even, "true history".[21] It embodies ancient and primitive beliefs in and interpretations of religious or supernatural phenomena such as the creation of the world, the destiny of man, the sequence of the seasons, and the struggle between good and evil. Even though the stories of Leyendas de Guatemala appear to involve naive, fantastic, and magical experiences of Guatemalans, E.O. James, writing generally about myth among so-called primitive peoples, states:

> It is not lack of logic that characterizes the outlook but a particular attitude to the relation between the sacred and the profane, the natural and the supernatural, mind and matter, cause and effect. Agent and act are not clearly differentiated because logic is at fault, but because of an imperfect understanding of natural laws and processes, and a different conception of the relation of the sacred order to the phenomenal world of everyday affairs.[22]

In our Chapter III, many of the mythic stories of Leyendas de Guatemala are selected and traced throughout the work and shown to be variations of some of the Maya-Quiché myths. The chapter therefore provides both a catalogue of the basic myths mentioned in the text and an explanation of their meanings. Moreover, since both pre-Columbian and post-Conquest Guatemala are reflected in the book, we have also paid attention to the phenomenon of the appearance of myths in different forms at different stages of Guatemala's history. Our discussion of this phenomenon is based essentially on the theories developed by Carl Jung for the understanding of the nature of myth, whereby the belief of a particular culture are considered to be part of a collective unconscious,[23] expressed through archetypes which evolve from century to century and are developed or transformed by successive generations. This approach is best suited to our aim of tracing the occurrence of the principal myths throughout Leyendas de Guatemala. At the same time it hints at Asturias'

use of Maya-Quiché mythology as something of relevance to contemporary Guatemala.

In choosing as subject matter the traditional legends and myths of his native land, and their evolution through the ages, Asturias faces a problem, shared by all authors, of transforming into art a specific topic that becomes altered by his own experience and biases. Although the final product was fashioned from the known, in its altered form it becomes the instrument by which the author hopes to influence the mores, the customs, the thinking of his society. As the critic Georg Lukács agrees, this basically is the role of literature in society:

> Literature has a great part to play in solving the new tasks imposed by the new life in every country. If literature is really to fulfill this role, . . . there must be as a natural prerequisite, a philosophical and political rebirth of the writers who produce it. But although this is an indispensible prerequisite, it is not enough. It is not only the opinions that must change, but the whole emotional world of men.[24]

The creation of a world peopled by supernatural characters in Leyendas de Guatemala, and the consequent revival of mixed philosophies and customs based essentially on the ancient pre-Columbian religions of Middle America, and to a lesser degree on Christian beliefs, reflect the author's desire to renew Guatemalan Literature by making it the vehicle for a more acceptable perception of his culture. Although Leyendas de Guatemala may be viewed by some as a work of imaginative fantasy, our focus on aspects of legend and myth to be found in it will show it to be a very careful composition, whereby Asturias demonstrates how his country's culture, particularly that derived from its indigenous

peoples, can be used to create an accomplished work of literary art.

NOTES

[1] Miguel Angel Asturias, Leyendas de Guatemala (Madrid: Ediciones Oriente, 1930). In this the first of many editions, the work consisted only of two introductory sections, "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo", and of five stories grouped together under the title of "Leyendas". While bearing in mind the state of the first edition, we will be concerned with the text as it appeared in its second edition (Buenos Aires: Edición Pleamar, 1948), in which two other sections, "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán" were added and published for the first time. By that time, 1948, Asturias had already published his prize winning novel El señor presidente.

[2] See Alfredo A. Roggiano and Pedro F. de Andrea, "Homenaje a Miguel Angel Asturias," Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. XXXV, No. 67 (Jan-April, 1969), pp. 13-267.

[3] Guatemala: Tipografía Sánchez y de Guise, 1923. On Asturias' formative years, see, Atilio Jorge Castelpoggi, Miguel Angel Asturias (Buenos Aires: Editorial "La Mandrágora", 1961), pp. 11-20.

[4] Los dioses, los héroes y los hombres de Guatemala antigua o el Libro del Consejo, Popol Vuh de los indios quiché, translated from the French by M.A. Asturias and J.M. González de Mendoza (Paris: Editorial Paris-América, 1927), and Los dioses, los héroes y los hombres de Guatemala antigua. Anales de los Xahil de los indios cakchiqueles, translated from the French by M.A. Asturias and J.M. González de Mendoza (Paris: Editorial Paris-América, 1928).

[5] Jean-Louis Dumas, "Asturias en Francia," Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. XXXV, No. 67 (Jan-April, 1967), pp. 117-120.

[6] Mario Monteforte-Toledo, Guatemala monografía sociológica, Colección Monografías Sociológicas (2nd ed., México: Instituto de Investigaciones sociales, Universidad Nacional de México, 1965), pp. 82-90. A more recent and much more general discussion on the socio-cultural groups in Guatemala is to be found in Richard N. Adams et al, Social Change in Latin America today: Its Implications for United States Policy, Council on Foreign Relations (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 238-248.

[7] Sylvanus Griswold Morley, The Ancient Maya, revised by George W. Brainerd (3rd ed., Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1956).

[8] Rafael Girard, Los Chortís ante el problema Maya. Historia de las culturas indígenas de América desde su origen hasta hoy, Vols. 1 to V, Colección Cultura Precolumbina (México, D.F. Antigua Librería Robredo, 1949).

[9] Gustavo Correa, El espíritu del mal en Guatemala: An essay in cultural semantics, publication 19 of Middle America Research Record Series (New Orleans: Tulane University Publications, 1955).

[10] Wilson Harris, "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas", Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (June, 1970), p. 12.

[11] Literary Currents in Hispanic America: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1940 - 1941 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), p. 3.

[12] Ibid., p. 20.

[13] El indio en la poesia de América Española (Buenos Aires: Joaquín Torres, 1939), and El indio en la novela de América (Buenos Aires: Editorial Futuro S.R.L., 1960)

[14] Raza y Color en la literatura antillana, Colección Mar Adentro, 12 (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1958).

[15] Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1966.

[16] See José Cid-Pérez and Dolores Martí de Cid, Teatro indio precolombino (Madrid: Aguilar, S.A. de Ediciones, 1964), pp. 163-221.

[17] See Seymour Menton, Historia crítica de la novela guatemalteca (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1960), pp. 195-241.

[18] Miguel Angel Asturias, Twayne's World Author Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970).

[19] See E.O. James, "The Nature and Function of Myth", Folklore, Volume LXVIII (Dec. 1957), p. 474.

[20] For examples of the legend, see: Edgar Allan Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination, with an Introduction by John Buchan (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1909). For the Spanish "leyendas", see Ramón Menéndez Pidal, ed., Floresta de leyendas heroicas españolas, III (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1956).

[21] Myth and Reality, trans., Willard R. Trask, World Perspectives, Vol. XXXI (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), p. 6.

[22] "The Nature and Function of Myth", pp. 475-476.

[23] C.G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, translated by R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, Pantheon Books (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1959), p. 155.

[24] Georg Lukacs, Studies in European Realism, The Universal Library (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), p. 17.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTENT AND COMPOSITION OF THE TEXT

We begin our consideration of Leyendas de Guatemala with an analysis of the way Asturias has ordered the stories, interconnected them, and combined the varied elements of Guatemalan history and culture in them, in order to obtain an overall view of the importance and role of legend and myth. Such an analysis, while dividing our discussion of the text into manageable units, will equally serve as an introduction to subsequent chapters where we will give particular attention to the legendary and the mythical, and to the possible reflection of a Guatemalan culture as a basis for Asturias' art. For the purposes of our discussion, Leyendas de Guatemala may be divided into the following four parts:

I. Introduction (two stories):

1. "Guatemala"
2. "Ahora que me acuerdo"

II. "Leyendas" (five stories):

1. "Leyenda del Volcán"
2. "Leyenda del Cadejo"
3. "Leyenda de la Tatuana"
4. "Leyenda del Sombrerón"
5. "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido"

III. "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" (one story narrated in six sections).

IV. "Cuculcán" (one story in dramatic form, including directions for staging).

In considering the implications of the structure of Leyendas de Guatemala and of the major divisions we have established in the text,

we will have two principal concerns: to demonstrate the total unity of the entire text, and to show that each of the divisions possesses a certain internal cohesion, related to a particular aspect of myth and legend. That is, it will be relevant to establish the interconnections between the major divisions of the text, as illustrated by the particular cohesion between the Introduction and the five stories of "Leyendas", and also, to show how the introductory stories play a key role in relation to both "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán". In short, it is our intention to demonstrate that in spite of the different stages in composition and publication of Leyendas de Guatemala, (see above Introduction, note 1), and in spite also, of the individual unity of the separate parts, there is, nonetheless, an overall unity. This becomes apparent in the interrelationships between legend and myth, that is, in the consistent way in which Asturias invents legend, and in his consistent use of myth as one of the bases for those inventions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The two stories, "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo" of the introductory section establish the atmosphere and introduce the subject matter which is to characterize the other divisions of the text.

In "Guatemala", the first of the stories, as the title suggests, we are introduced to Guatemala the town, or perhaps the country, and its society; the rich, the religious, the artisans, and the poor, including the old folks, the "güegüechos", who will reappear in "Ahora que me acuerdo" as the narrators of the subsequent "leyendas". "Guatemala" begins with a direct description of Guatemalan scenery used as a point of departure in order to evoke history. A town is envisaged with its small square, narrow

streets, and roadside shops manned by superstitious old people. "High society families"polarized around the mayor and the bishop, the symbols of civil and ecclesiastical authority, are represented as having an existence almost completely isolated from the lower classes. With the mention of the bishop and the mayor, figures whose origin in Guatemala is to be traced to the beginning of the Colonial period, the notion of history first appears. And indeed, the narrative process of "Guatemala" is that of introducing an historical setting which gradually assumes, as a general characteristic, an atmosphere of fantasy, of magic and of dream, thereby leading into a world where legend and myth predominate. In addition to the town and its people, the climate is also described, with its two contrasting tropical seasons of rainy winters, when rivers grow large and powerful, and dry summers,[1] when the trees of the forests shed their parched leaves, giving a semblance of nakedness to the countryside. After this beginning, based on a more immediate and tangible picture of Guatemala, the key to the composition of the remainder of the story is given:

> Como se cuenta en las historias que ahora nadie cree - ni las abuelas ni los niños -, esta ciudad fue construida sobre ciudades enterradas en el centro de América.[2] (p. 21)

The idea of cities constructed on the ruins of others suggests the historical element, and indicates the form that the rest of the tale will take as a series of images in which the imagination is used to reconstruct scenes from Guatemala's past.

The overpowering presence of the forest which features prominently in "Guatemala" evokes the legendary belief that: "los árboles respiran el aliento de las personas que habitan las ciudades enterradas" (p. 21). The suggestion that forests now thrive on the site of ancient cities enclosing the cultural treasures of that civilization, immediately

sets the imagination to work, in an attempt to restore, even in fantasy, some aspects of that forgotten past. Moreover, the overwhelming effect of the surrounding forests enshrouds the inhabitants in a perpetual dream:

> Los árboles hechizan la ciudad entera. La tela delgadísima del sueño se puebla de sombras que la hacen temblar. Ronda por Casa-Mata la Tatuana. El Sombrerón recorre los portales de un extremo a otro: salta, rueda, es Sátanas de hule. Y asoma por las vegas el Cadejo, que roba mozas de trenzas largas y hace ñudos en las crines de los caballos. Empero, ni una pestaña se mueve en el fondo de la ciudad dormida, ni nada pasa realmente en la carne de las cosas sensibles. (p. 22)

These dreams, summed up here in single sentences, are in fact, the myth and the legend, which receive fuller elaborations later on, in the other "leyendas". Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the town, including the "güegüechos", exist in an altered state of consciousness, which keeps alive in their minds perpetually, a perception of their experiences, their origins and their history. The legends and the myths which are narrated in the rest of the story, and indeed, in the other "leyendas" of the book, as will be discussed more fully subsequently, are excerpts from these experiences. To this extent, the general introductory function of "Guatemala" to the remainder of Leyendas de Guatemala is already served. Equally served is the secondary level of unity in the text, that of the interconnections among the stories within the major sections of the book, since "Guatemala" anticipates the second introductory story, "Ahora que me acuerdo", by already presenting the "güegüechos" and the forests, its two important points of departure.

In the atmosphere of dream, in which the inhabitants of Guatemala live, the imagination, called "El Cuco de los sueños", is awakened to begin a day of imaginary journey through Guatemala. The journey lasts only one day like a legend encompassing the history of many centuries in chrono-

logical sequence. Beginning in the early morning, "sobre un cielo juvenil" (p. 22), in the Mayan city of Palenque, the legendary scene is that of two princesses playing by a cage of humming birds. In Copan, another ancient Mayan city, the King appears, smoking from a bamboo pipe, in his palatial gardens decorated by silver-skinned deer. When the sun is high in the sky, "un tiempo viejo de las horas viejas" (p. 23), when the stagnant waters where alligators sleep is lukewarm, already heated by a brilliant sun, the scene shifts to Quirigua for a fleeting image of a Mayan sacrificial scene, with the priest, the virgin, the sacrificial knife, the altar, and the blood of the victim. In Tikal, another Mayan city, to which the imagination travels, the scene is one of desolation and abandonment, caused by the retreat of warriors and their families. Now famous only for their arqueological remains, the cities referred to, Palenque, Copan, Quirigua and Tikal were important centres of Mayan civilization which flourished respectively in the pre-Classic, the Classic, and the post-Classic periods, lasting from 1500 BC to 1697 AD.[3] These renowned centres of Maya-Quiché Indian civilization are summed up as:

> ¡Ciudades sonoras como mares abiertos!
> A sus pies de piedras, bajo la vestidura ancha ceñida de leyendas, juega un pueblo niño a la política, al comercio, a la guerra, señalándose en las eras de paz el aparecimiento de maestros-magos que por ciudades y campos enseñaban la fabricación de las telas, el valor del cero y las sazones del sustento. (p. 24)

Seen at a time when history or fantasy has already transformed them into images, they occupy the bright period of the legendary world, the daylight of the imaginary day's journey; as the author suggests: "La flor del maíz no fue más bella que la última mañana de estos reinos" (p. 25).

At nightfall, the next important historical period, that of Colonial Guatemala comes into focus. The first images symbolize the

period of exploration, conquest and settlement in the New World depicted by a warrior-colonist bidding farewell to his wife as he departs for the Spice Islands. The murmur of Ave-Marias, recited by clerics, contrasts in the background with the noise of soldiers and settlers who fight, abusing the name of God. The fact that it is night is betrayed by the presence of the silvery moon: "Trece navíos aparejados en el golfo azul, bajo la luna de plata" (p. 25). Then, a devout monk sleeps, wrapped up in his cloak, and lamps blink in the vaulted niches of the church. In Antigua, the historical location of the next image, a scene of a sophisticated Colonial society portrays the Catholic religion as being well entrenched, but the inhabitants still exhibit that state of perpetual dreamlike unawareness referred to earlier. The bishop and the mayor, symbols respectively of Church and State authority, are seen, as lacking in vision as any other, with drooping eyelids, participating under the cover of darkness in the worldly amusements of high society:

> Alguna puerta se abre dando paso al señor obispo, que viene seguido del señor alcalde. Se habla a media voz. Se ve con los párpados caídos. La visión de la vida a través de los ojos entreabiertos es clásica en las ciudades conventuales. (p. 25)

The Colonial period represents the final stage in the twenty-four hour imaginary journey through Guatemala's legendary history. It begins shortly after midnight and ends in the early morning hours, when Fray Pedro de Betancourt, a symbolic representative of the church, is fast asleep. The precise moment of the change, through conquest, from pre-Columbian to Colonial Society is not referred to, but the change is made clear in a reference to "la primera ciudad de los conquistadores" (p. 25) when, beginning with Santiago, a survey is made of the important Colonial cities of Guatemala. Moreover, the survey is not a mere review of the

pictures from these historical cities, but is an attempt to capture the flavour of Colonial Society. On the one hand is the secular society surrounding the civic organization of the colony:

> Las señoras, en sillas de altos espaldares, se dejan saludar por caballeros de bigote petulante y traje de negro y plata. Esta une al pie breve la mirada lánguida. Aquélla tiene los cabellos de seda. Un perfume desmaya el aliento de la que ahora conversa con un señor de la Audiencia. (pp. 25-26)

On the other hand is the ecclesiastical society, based upon the monastic and other religious institutions introduced into Guatemala with the conquest, and forming an important part of Colonial Guatemala. Consequently, the greater part of Asturias' attention, in his evocation of Colonial Guatemala, is given to a description of its religious facet, at a time when the former warrior-colonists spend more time in amorous exploits, and the missionary priests have already been able to establish churches and recruit followers. Thus, the Church of St. Francis in Antigua is described as it was during the seventeenth century, the date being set by the presence in the story of Rodrigo Arias de Maldonado, a soldier and adventurer become priest; and Pedro de Betancourt, head of the Belemite Order, hailed as a saint and miracle worker. Here, Asturias has taken certain liberties with historical data in that the fact of Fray Pedro's burial in the church is transformed to the more spectacular legendary story of his encountering a former lady friend while praying there. These details indicate that there is some confusion of the events in Fray Pedro's life with those of his successor Don Rodrigo Arias de Maldonado. (See Asturias' notes to the text pp. 1065-1066, and p. 1070). The point which may be emphasized, is the way in which Asturias takes certain historical facts, is able to connect them, and endow them with the quality of legend.

At the end of that journey through the imaginary world of Guatemala's

past, a concluding section gradually discards the previous technique as the author, now using the first person, intimates his feelings towards his country. A link with the preceding part is effected in this final section which begins with the sentence, "El Cuco de los Sueños va hilando los cuentos" (p. 27), a sentence previously repeated earlier in the text, unifying the varied scenes, and there, at the same time, reinforcing the point that they were all scenes from a dream, or from the imagination. The final section, among other things, briefly mentions some important historic steps in the development of the European influence on thought and culture in Guatemala. The process begins with the early histories of the Chroniclers, and is expedited with the introduction of printing.[4] That influence, however, produced the dream world evoked earlier in the "leyenda", in which traditional Maya-Quiché legends and myths have become dispossessed in the culture of the land and only survive enclosed within the subconscious of the people. Therefore, with his arrival in the capital, Guatemala de la Asunción, the author intends to make his contribution, presumably in Leyendas de Guatemala, in order that a new attitude towards the traditional culture may be discovered.

"Guatemala" ends after having made a connection with the first part, for, at its conclusion, there is a return to the initial description of a Guatemalan topography, and a society threatened with remaining perpetually drugged through the use of a narcotic plant, the "yerbamala", which grows on every fence. Nevertheless, as a sign or hope, the young ones in their children's game seem to clamour for progress with the cry of "¡Andares Andares!" (p. 27).

In "Ahora que me acuerdo", the second part of the introductory section of Leyendas de Guatemala, are to be found characteristics similar

to those encountered in "Guatemala", the first part. There is an identical three-part internal structure consisting of an introductory segment, the central narrative, and a conclusion. The introductory function of both stories is similar in that they tend to create an atmosphere of fantasy based on the topography and history of Guatemala, and consequently serve to establish the general framework for the ensuing "leyendas". Both are concerned with time, but "Ahora que me acuerdo" is more concerned with sacred history, or myth, while "Guatemala" is more concerned with history and legend. Indeed, these very similarities, and the relationship between the two stories thereby created, establish them as a single introductory section for Leyendas de Guatemala as a whole.

The first segment of "Ahora que me acuerdo" introduces its participants, the two "güegüechos", Don Chepe and Niña Tina, already alluded to as the authorities on traditional stories in "Guatemala", and Cuero de Oro, who has approached the "güegüechos" to hear legend narrated. But then, almost as an initiation, he narrates what in effect is the main story of the "leyenda". In this introductory section time is distorted once again as in the dream world of "Guatemala", but on this occasion, through the influence of a drug:

> --El influjo hechicero del chipilín--habla la Niña Tina--me privó de la conciencia del tiempo, comprendido como sucesión de días y de años. El chipilín, arbolito de párpados con sueño, destruye la acción del tiempo y bajo su virtud se llega al estado en que enterraron a los caciques, los viejos sacerdotes del reino. (p. 29)

The effect is further heightened when Don Chepe refers to the suspension of his normal physical sensations. Describing his own magical experience, he attains "el estado de la transparencia bajo el hechizo de la guarda barranca" (p. 20), in which state he is unaware of the passage

of time. At this point, Cuero de Oro, a novice in the magical arts, in attempting to demonstrate that his marginal experience qualifies him for the confidence and respect of the sorcerers, narrates his mythical experience of a reversal in time, a vision, which in effect is the subject of this story.

This first narration of a supernatural experience, contributes enormously to the transformation of Guatemala into a world where myth is the predominating element. As Cuero de Oro penetrates deeper and deeper into the forests, he becomes more and more exposed to the highest mysteries of Mayan mythology. The imaginary experience, as if in a dream, causes time to unfold in reverse, past the creation of the first forefathers of the Maya-Quiché people, past the creation of the universe itself, and even beyond, to the epoch when there existed only a single supreme being, who is none other than the feathered serpent-god of pre-Columbian Indian mythology, Kukulkán. Indeed, the intent of the whole erotic, but religious, experience is to express the incarnation of Cuero de Oro as the pre-Columbian god. In doing so, he sustains the idea initiated in "Guatemala" of having been cloaked, from infancy, in that dreamy atmosphere of a forested country. Having spent youthful days there enjoying, as in a dream, the festivals, the catastrophes, and the madness, now, after a period of absence, he wants to return to share the wisdom of that legendary world. It is for this reason that Niña Tina and Don Chepe are sought out as sources of legend and myth, and of the stories narrated in Leyendas de Guatemala (p. 1063). At the end of the narration, the conditions which prevailed at the start are reintroduced, as Cuero de Oro's vision ceases, and he apologizes for having allowed himself to be carried away:

> Pero acuérdaseme ahora que he venido a oír cantar leyendas de Guatemala y no me cuadra que sus mercedes callen de una pieza, como si les hubiesen comido la lengua los ratones . . . (p. 34)

The "güegüechos" now respect him for the deep spiritual experience shared, and, at the end of it all, time ceases to reverse as before, but progresses normally: "La tarde cansa con su mirar de bestia maltratada. En la tienda hace noche . . . " (p. 34).

As in "Guatemala" the impression is that of two levels of time. On the one level, there is the period of time that appears to elapse during the course of the conversation among the participants of the story: when the "leyenda" begins, images of dawn and of the morning, predominate; when it ends, dark has already set in. The period of time elapsed is the passage of one day. On a different level, however, and as in "Guatemala", legendary events which span many centuries are narrated. However, unlike the forward chronology of "Guatemala", time in "Ahora que me acuerdo" flows in a reverse direction, as if the narrator were recalling events from memory, a fact emphasized by the actual title of the "leyenda". The total effect of the distortion of time in both stories is to establish for the following sections of Leyendas de Guatemala a concept of time, whereby its measurement as "una sucesión de días y de años" (p. 29), is no longer relevant.

"Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo" complement each other in several ways. By encompassing a series of legendary scenes, while the imagination moves from one city to another, "Guatemala" anticipates the structure of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán", which both consist of a number of stories. "Ahora que me acuerdo", however, in which only one tale is narrated, anticipates in contrast the structure of the individual stories in the section "Leyendas". More particularly,

the subject matter of "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo" anticipates the subjects of the ensuing stories and begins the differentiation between legend and myth. "Ahora que me acuerdo" deals with a topic that has as its base the sacred belief of the myth of the god Kukulkán, the main mythical subject, among others, of the final dramatized story in Leyendas de Guatemala. Similarly, the many topics introducted in "Guatemala", conform to our definition of legend as dealing principally with history, namely, the Mayan civilization, the conquest and religious conversion of Guatemala, and the Spanish Colonial civilization, all topics from Guatemalan history, which are the main subjects of the stories narrated in the section "Leyendas". Together in fact, the subjects of "Guatemala", which is largely concerned with history, and of "Ahora que me acuerdo", mainly involved with myth, constitute the basis of the mythical and legendary world of Leyendas de Guatemala as a whole, with the legends invented from a mixture of both.

II. LEYENDAS

Since the first edition of Leyendas de Guatemala consisted solely of two sections, the two introductory stories and five "leyendas", there are understandably closer structural links between them than between the introductory section alone and the two sections added in later editions, "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán". In our analysis of the composition of the five "leyendas", we will show the cohesion of the first edition of Leyendas de Guatemala, and demonstrate how it is achieved through the development of a similar dreamlike atmosphere, and the same subject matter already presented in"Guatemala" and in"Ahora que me acuerdo".

Additionally, it will be shown how the five "leyendas" constitute a single unit with a complementary internal structure.

Since the distortion of time has been seen as one of the central characteristics of "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo", it is well to begin our consideration of the "Leyendas" with a discussion of that characteristic. As we established, the distortion of time in the introductory "leyendas" allowed, firstly in"Guatemala", for the presentation of a chronological survey of Guatemalan history, and secondly in "Ahora que me acuerdo", for a description of a return to the mythic origins of the Mayan people. The broad sweeps through time which characterize the introductory stories are affected in the treatment of time in the ensuing "leyendas", in which Asturias has eliminated the distinct separation of chronological periods. The narration of events from widely separated periods of time, whether of legendary, historical, or mythical origin, is juxtaposed and presented as if the events narrated occurred within the same period or within the span of the same day. There, as we saw, the time that elapses during the narration, as opposed to the time span of many centuries of the events narrated, appears to equal the span of a single day. That it was Asturias' intention that time should be considered in this way is ably demonstrated by the epigraph he gave to the first of the five "leyendas": "Hubo en un siglo un día que duró muchos siglos" (p. 37). The first characteristic shared by the five "leyendas" and the two introductory stories, then, is that of the compression of time, a device which perhaps serves the purpose of establishing the perennial validity of legend and myth and of proposing that events pertaining to their world have a continued coexistence.

The first story, "Leyenda del Volcán", includes a vision of Catholic saints and the Mayan creation myth.[5] Of the three beings who originated in the water, it is said:

> Monte en un Ave era el recuerdo de su madre y
> su padre, bestia color de agua llovida que
> mataron en el mar para ganar la tierra . . . (p. 38)

The allusion is to the aquatic origin of the first created man of the Quiché people.[6] But, before the creation story is complete, a very Catholic vision appears of a saint, a white lily and a boy child. The second story "Leyenda del Cadejo" is a tale which relates how a Guatemalan version of the Christian devil came into existence. The subject matter, already introduced in "Guatemala", is based on the fact that the non-Christian inhabitants of Guatemala were converted to Catholicism.[7] Here, however, this fact provides the medium for the juxtaposition of two religious themes. The Cadejo's origin is based on the traditional Mayan gods (see Chapter III, pp. 91 - 94), but he is now formed from the hair of a Christian nun. In "Leyenda del Sombrerón", a similar approach to time again mixes Mayan and Christian religious concepts, not only in referring to the demon figure, the Sombrerón, itself a combination of both religious elements, but also in the presence throughout the story of two opposing religious influences: the monk, with his devoutly Christian preoccupations, and the "pelota", which may symbolize the Mayan religious element in the story. An equivalent juxtaposition occurs in "Leyenda de la Tatuana", where the world of a priest from the pre-Columbian era unites with that of a greedy merchant from the Colonial period. The fifth and final "leyenda" of this group illustrates best of all the device used by Asturias to make legend, by bringing together widely separated topics from Guatemalan history. In dealing precisely with

the conquest, "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido" provides the ideal opportunity for juxtaposing elements from two distinct historical periods. The setting is that of the conquest which places it between 1523 and 1545, the period it took the Spaniards to overcome the scattered strong-holds of Indian resistance in Yucatán and Guatemala.[8] The presence of Pedro de Alvarado in the story suggests that it is a historical record of some kind, but the narrative presents a distorted picture of history. On the one hand, the fierce battle near the lake seems to recall the famous battle near Lake Atitlán when the Indian warriors were defeated by 140 Spanish soldiers under Alvarado's command. Moreover, in the story, the obvious greed of the strangers and the fervent efforts by the local inhabitants to protect their gold, silver and other treasures, hint strongly at the great lust for riches and fame of Alvarado and of the troops under his command. It was this characteristic which, coupled with his cruelty, singled him out for infamy above the other conquistadores of his time, who were already renowned for their greed, and whose voyages of discovery and conquest in America were greatly motivated by the search for gold.[9] On the other hand, the disaster of the volcanic eruption in the story recalls the destruction of many of the Indian and Spanish occupants of the first capital site of Santiago, an historical event which occurred at a later date, after Alvarado's death, when his wife Doña Beatriz de la Cuerva governed the colony.[10] There is therefore some distortion of history in the legend, but the greatest conflict of all in time results because the Mayan cheftain Kukulkán, who existed centuries before the conquest, participates in these events from the Spanish colonial period of Guatemala's history.

The treatment of time in the narration of these historical events is illustrative of the way legend is created, and is consistent

with the dreamlike atmosphere of the introductory stories, since, in a dream, one's awareness of time is confused. The element of dream serves as another link between the introductory stories and the five "Leyendas", for, as an examination of the epigraphs will show, the visions evoked in the introductory stories are elaborated and expanded in the "Leyendas". For the moment, we will concern ourselves mainly with how that dream effect is obtained through the use of epigraphs. Later in Chapter II, we will discuss dream from a different aspect, that is, as a technique of style.

The epigraph to "Leyenda del Volcán", "Hubo en un siglo un día que duró muchos siglos" (pp. 38 - 40) recurs in the story, but its meaning recalls the treatment of time in "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo", in which the events of centuries are presented as though they occurred in one day. The epigraph effectively recalls the events of centuries narrated in the earlier stories, while, within the "Leyenda del Volcán", it refers to Nido the protagonist, who experiences a day into which the events of centuries are compressed. The epigraph of "Leyenda del Cadejo" is the sentence, "Y asoma por las vegas el Cadejo, que roba mozas de trenzas largas y hace ñudos en las crines de los caballos" (p.42), a sentence which also figures in "Guatemala" as one of the dreams of the somnolent inhabitants (p. 22). As epigraph to "Leyenda del Cadejo", it summarizes the story of how a young novice in the convent of San Francisco loses her beautiful lock of hair to the devil, El Cadejo. Similarly, "Leyenda de la Tatuana" has, for epigraph, the phrase, "Ronda por Casa-Mata la Tatuana" (p.47), which also appears in "Guatemala" (p. 22), and which gives a premonition of the story of El Maestro, who saves himself and the beautiful slave girl from prison and death, by means of a magical tatoo. A third

story, "Leyenda del Sombrerón", has an epigraph that is also taken from "Guatemala": "El Sombrerón recorre los portales" (pp. 22 and 53). The Sombrerón is the demon figure in the legend formed by magic from a bewitched "pelota", which sits disproportionately, in the guise of a very large hat, on the head of a small boy. The epigraph for the last story, "El Volcán despejado era la guerra" (pp. 55 and 62), has no connections beyond the "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido". There it refers to the oracular volcano, which, when covered in cloud predicts peace, but forecasts war when the cloud dissipates.

With the effect of premonitions, the epigraphs perform the common function of summarizing in advance a tale which follows. As with images from a dream there are slight inaccuracies of detail. Thus, the demon figure, El Sombrerón, does not exactly roam from door to door in the story as the epigraph suggests, nor does the "Leyenda del Cadejo" have anything to do with horses' manes. The use of the epigraphs as a device to create the impression of a dream is, however, especially supported by the three epigraphs which originate in the introductory "leyenda", "Guatemala", where they occur as the subject of the dreams which are now elaborated upon as the stories of "Leyendas".

In fact, the use of epigraphs chosen from the introductory section "Guatemala" indicates that the stories or legends they summarize are folk tales of Guatemala. Along with the epigraphs, the various other devices used in presenting these narrations in a setting of altered consciousness, confirm our definition of legend as a "distorted or idealized narration of historical or supernatural events". Thus the following elements contribute to the idealization of events, and describe the process of transforming historical facts into traditional folk tales or legend: the recurrent dream effect along with the epigraphs used in such a manner as to

enhance that effect; the use of time in an unusual juxtapositioning of historical events and in a time reversal from the present to the past. In spite of these modifications, the stories of the "Leyendas", like the introductory stories, encompass three main topics from Guatemala's history, the pre-Columbian era, the period of Conquest, and the Spanish Colonial regime; and indeed, many historical figures and events from these periods have been recognized as the bases for the tales. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, the subject of the various stories represents a folk understanding of history, albeit a distorted version.

Having seen some of the ways in which a relationship is established between the introductory stories and the five "leyendas", there remains the matter of seeing in what ways the five "leyendas" as a group establish their own structural pattern. A further consideration of the subject of each of the five "leyendas" reveals a very deliberate pattern in the order of the stories in that the emphasis of the subjects alternates between the pre- and post-Columbian eras. Essentially, it is an extension of the juxtapositioning within the stories themselves of the themes which we considered earlier in this chapter.

The strong telluric slant of the first story "Leyenda del Volcán", in which the mountains, the forests, and the weather predominate, alternates with the strictly religious setting of the second story of "Leyenda del Cadejo", which deals with the experiences of a nun inside the walls of a convent. The Christian content of this second tale alternates with the mainly Mayan element of the third tale, "Leyenda de la Tatuana" in which magic is practised by the protagonist who is, in effect, an Indian "medicine-man". The next story, "Leyenda del Sombrerón", has more Christian overtones as the topic shifts back to a monastery, to the

eccentricities of a monk. Finally, the last story in the group of "Leyendas", "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", by treating the theme of the conquest, summarizes the alternation process by confronting both pre- and post-Columbian themes. Divergent aspects of legend and myth are thus combined by changing the emphasis of subject from one story to the next, while, in the final "leyenda" because of the theme of the conquest, an apotheosis of the whole process of alternation and juxtaposition of opposing themes is attained.

This pattern of alternating the emphasis in the subject, additionally suggests a possible pyramidal structure. The first and fifth "leyendas" of the group occupy the first level. They are similar in that their epigraphs, contrary to those of the other three, do not appear previously in "Guatemala", but recur within the "leyendas" themselves as an integral part of the story. In these two also, natural disasters, volcanic eruptions in both, and an earthquake and a hurricane in "Leyenda del Volcán", occur as important elements of the plot. "Leyenda del Cadejo" and "Leyenda del Sombrerón", the second and the fourth "leyendas", together form the second level of the pyramid, because, in addition to the common origin of their epigraphs, taken from "Guatemala", they both depict life inside colonial religious houses, and have common themes of how separate versions of the Guatemalan demon originated. At the centre, the third "leyenda", "Leyenda de la Tatuana", separates the pair just discussed, but, because of the similar origin of its epigraph, is to be grouped with them. However, a completely different subject matter separates it and places it, like the apex of the pyramid, on a different level within the inner group of three. The overall internal structure of the "Leyendas" has a suggestion of the esoteric: the alternating themes reflect the juxtaposition of opposing qualities, such as good and evil, inherent in

Mayan religious philosophy, while the pyramidal design recalls the centres of their worship.

III. LOS BRUJOS DE LA TORMENTA PRIMAVERAL

Although "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán" did not form part of the first edition of Leyendas de Guatemala, they nonetheless form an intrinsic part of the overall work in its approach to legend and myth. Hence, in considering the structure of these two sections of the book, our first intention will be to demonstrate their conformity with the rest of the text. Then we will be able to establish the new dimensions which are contributed by them.

Upon first examining "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" we find that its main subject is a sacred history, and that, like the tales of the "Leyendas", this story is an elaboration of the content of the introductory "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo". These two introduced the whole spectrum of Guatemalan folk history as the content of the book, and, as has been seen, these stories presented as legend the various periods of Guatemala's recorded history, the pre-Columbian, the Conquest and the post-Conquest periods. "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" complements that summary of Guatamalan history by dealing in mythic terms with earlier periods of pre-history, recorded only through the oral traditions and stories of the Mayan elders, wise men and priests, then preserved in the memory to be passed on orally to succeeding generations. The "leyenda" deals principally with myth since its stories contain topics such as the creation of man and the gods, and the existence of the earth before it was inhabited.

A somewhat longer "leyenda" than most of the others, "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" suggests various interpretations. On one level,

it is a geological history of Guatemala with a record of the climatic changes which accompany each geological age. When this interpretation is pursued, the "leyenda" can be regarded as referring to a series of geneses and apocalypses of different mythical worlds,[12] each one of which represents a different geological period whose end is caused by some gigantic natural disaster. The extreme variations of climate described in the story, resulting in destructions by flood, by high winds, by earthquakes, and by fire, may be regarded as mythical interpretations. As a factual base for this view, it is interesting to note that geographers have recorded evidence of climatic fluctuations, experienced from century to century on the same part of the earth, for reasons such as alterations in the distance of the earth from the sun and consequent fluctuations in the level of the land relative to the sea.[13] Because of an imperfect understanding of these natural laws and processes, such natural phenomena could conceivably have been translated by the Mayans as an expression of the divine, resulting in the mythical stories of creations and destructions.

Another interpretation of the stories presents itself upon a second consideration of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" as the sacred history of different peoples who, in very early pre-Columbian times, inhabited that part of the American continent. The narrative may then be seen as an alternating succession of floods, caused by excessive rainfall, and droughts and fires from the intensive heat of a rainless tropical summer. The droughts and floods may be an exaggerated figurative indication of seasonal changes in the climate of Guatemala. The climate, as described by Asturias, for the same geographical region, is consistent in the different stories even when they deal with separate historical

periods. For example, there is a great similarity in the climate of the prehistoric era in which the stories of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" are located, and that of the more recent pre-Columbian times, described as follows in the "leyenda" "Guatemala":

> En verano, la aboleda se borra entre las hojas amarillas, los paisajes aparecen desnudos, con claridad de vino viejo, y en invierno, el río crece y se lleva el puente. (p. 21)

This second interpretation indicates a unifying aspect of the book since a similar climate is established between different parts of it; but more important is the confirmation that, in matters of geography as with history, the entire content of the book deals with Guatemala.

A closer examination of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" traces how the series of six stories each follows the creation of a particular settlement to its subsequent destruction by either flood or fire. In the era of Juan Poyé, after a period of great droughts which result in fire, "Poyé reculó ante la luz, seguido de su mujer, como cuando el cometa. Los árboles ardían sin alboroto" (p. 68); then, the rains fall: "Una gota de su inmenso caudal en el vientre de la Juana Poyé engendró las lluvias" (p. 71); and the rainwater runs off to form rivers. The second section of the story appears as a period dominated by rains, in which the fight between plants and minerals symbolizes the process of erosion, which is expressly mentioned:

> Los ríos navegables, los hijos de las lluvias, los del comercio carnal con el mar, andaban en la superficie de la tierra y dentro de la tierra en lucha con las montañas, los volcanes y los llanos engañadores que se paseaban por el suelo comido de abismos . . . (p. 71)

At the end of this section there is a dramatic climatic change, as droughts and fires become common again: ". . . empezó la nueva lucha,

el nuevo incendio, el celo solar, la quemadura en verde, en rojo, en negro, en azul, y en amarillo . . . " (p. 72). A flood which ultimately destroys the third settlement, La Ciudad de Serpiente con Chorros Horizontes, indicates another climatic reversal whereby strong winds and rains dominate, so that: "se fueron los hombres engusanados por el viento" (p. 74). In the fourth section of the story, the preoccupation with rivers, including their personification, again suggests another geological era dominated by abundant rainfall. Following this, another age is announced by volcanic eruptions: "una erupción volcánica anunció el aparecimiento de Saliva de Espejo el Guacamayo" (p. 76). But, the settlement with which this part of the story deals, is washed away as if by the rising level of the waters of the rivers:

> ¿Cuántas lenguas de río lamieron la ciudad hasta llevársela? Poco a poco, perdida su consistencia, ablandándose como un sueño y se deshizo en el agua . . . (p. 80)

When this last legendary settlement vanishes in the flood, the country gradually enters the period of the present modern age with the fertility and moisture which permitted the growth of dense tropical vegetation, the same forest which, as was seen in "Guatemala", overran the legendary cities.

Because "Juan Poyé reapareció en sus nietos" (p. 71), it is recognized that all six parts, into which the story is divided, in a way, constitute the story of the god Juan Poyé. The first part functions as an introduction to the "leyenda" by presenting the two main characters, and by establishing them as the forefathers of the protagonists of the other five parts. Their first offspring, and the protagonists of the second part of the "leyenda", are the mineral Gold and the plant Cactus, whose dispute with each other provides the subject matter for that sec-

tion of the story. Similarly, in the third section, the protagonist Chorro de Horizontes, another offspring from the two reptiles, is of vegetable origin, "sus dos manos con nervaduras de hojas", and "sus pies de maíz (p. 73). In the fourth section, the main character is a river, Esposo de las Garzas Rosadas, "nieto de Juan Poyé-Juana Poyé, hijo navegable de lluvias" (p. 76). The last descendant of these two appears in the fifth section as the god Guacamayo: "Una erupción volcánica de chorchas anunció el aparecimiento de Saliva de Espejo, el Guacamayo" (p. 76). In this settlement many of the characters from the former sections reappear. This is the climax and turning point of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", for, at the end of this section, all the settlements with their inhabitants, the descendants of Juan and Juana Poyé, are dismissed as a fictitious creation of the gods:

> Una cronología lenta, arena de cataclismo
> sacudida a través de las piedras que la viruela
> de las inscripciones iba corrompiendo, como la
> baba del invierno había corrompido las maderas
> que guardaban los fastos de la cronología de
> los hombres pintados, hacía olvidar a los habitantes
> lo que en verdad eran, creación ficticia, ocio de
> los dioses, y les daba pie para sentirse inmortales.
> (p. 80)

Indeed, the last settlement disappears in the end, but memories of it remain in the subconscious. Up to this point, the "leyenda" is structured in such a way that each section deals with a particular god, who establishes a settlement and directs the activities of the people who live in it. The value of the sixth section, apart from its task as a conclusion to "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", is to restore Guatemala to the state in which it appeared in the first "leyenda". The forest, or vegetation, as it is called, advances, spurred on by constant rains, to surround and envelop the settlements until they are overrun by trees. The

physical environment of Guatemala is returned to the forested form in which it was found before it was settled, providing a link with the woods of "Ahora que me acuerdo", through which Cuero de Oro travels, and the trees of the first "leyenda" "Guatemala", which enclose the lost and buried cities. This whole conclusion seems to be an illustration by Asturias of how the country's heritage became enveloped inside a jungle overgrowth, following the enactment of sacred histories such as those just outlined in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral".

The dreamlike atmosphere introduced in "Guatemala" and in "Ahora que me acuerdo", also persists in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral". The idea that Asturias is dealing with different world dimensions is conveyed by a choice as characters of plants, such as Cactus and perhaps Chorro de Horizontes, of objects such as El Oro, of rivers, Río de las Garzas Rosadas, and of wild beasts, mortals, and gods. As will be elaborated in our discussion on style, a process of humanization simulates the unnatural setting of dreams, when stones, and the posts of a temple appear to speak: "¡Qué duerma! dijeron las columnas de un templo sin techo" (p. 76). Indeed the whole idea of a dream setting to "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" is introduced from the start of the "leyenda" and with the repetition throughout of "Si sería parte de su sueño" (p. 68), where the protagonists Juan and Juana Poyé are frequently presented dozing and as if experiencing a dream.

The juxtaposition and alternation which enhanced the supernatural aspect of the earlier "leyendas" is replaced in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" by an equivalent process of juxtaposition, achieved on this occasion, by causing characters that normally do not interact to behave as equals. Previously, where legend was the subject, the juxta-

position consisted merely of a mingling of events from different historical periods, but here, where myth is the subject, non-human and human, plant and mineral characters, are linked in such associations as that which enables "la lucha del Cactus con el Oro" (p. 71), suggesting that the subject matter involves more fundamental beliefs. The unusual association of characters occurs in the first five sections of the story, but the point is best illustrated in the fifth section, since a number of the characters first presented in the earlier sections of the "leyenda" again appear. Apart from the mortals present, some seem to represent the mineral world, having "hueso de plata de tanto ver la luna" (p. 77), some are gods, whose priests guard the entrance to large serpent-like caves; others are ants that rebuild a new city with the grains of sand dragged conscientiously from the water; and others are wild beasts which attack and kill with bewitched claws.

Similarities between the two introductory "leyendas", "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo", and "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", also result from a continuation in the latter of an approach to time which retains something of the atmosphere introduced in the earlier portion of the work. In this instance, during the six sections of the single story a vast geological time only is referred to, which parallels the vast legendary time spanned by the many centuries necessary for the events of "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo". Although there are no time reversals, time in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" seems legendary, since in each one of the six sections, the story of a whole creation, with the development of its civilization and its destruction is told in a few paragraphs. Moreover, it is time measured by the gods, and as an illustration of the extensiveness of the period involved, Guacamayo, whom we

will identify later as having existed in the latest creation of the Mayan civilization, first appears almost at the end of the story, shortly before the remnants of that civilization become overgrown with forests. Only a very small portion, towards the end of the story, deals with the centuries of known Maya-Quiché civilization, with the result that the impression of an exceedingly vast span of time is formed. This is especially so when this story is compared with "Guatemala". For, in "Guatemala", most of the "leyenda" covers that period of history which, in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", is treated with much brevity.

Since, as we have seen, the protagonists of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" include non-humans, rivers, plants, and gods, time for each of them is different from the conventional understanding of it. Hence the usual understanding of time is distorted and invalid. The effects of dream simulations and the treatment of time, outlined in this "leyenda", also maintain a setting similar to that of the preceding "leyendas" and transform the subject into legend. In this instance, legend is created when the two subjects of a geological history and myth are presented within the context of a dream world and a distorted time frame. Consequently, our study of legend in Leyendas de Guatemala has revealed it so far to mean folk interpretations of stories taken from all periods of Guatemala's history. And, two kinds of legends are distinguishable, the one based on history, the other based on religious beliefs. Just as history dominates as the subject of the five stories of "Leyendas", so also does the myth of Juan Poyé and his descendants, serve as the main inspiration for Asturias' legend in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral". Legend and myth therefore are not mutually exclusive, but rather complement each other, since in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", legend is based essentially on the mythology from ancient indigenous religion of Guatemala.

IV. CUCULCAN

In "Leyendas" and in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", we saw how both legend and myth were used as the subject of the stories of Leyendas de Guatemala, where legend is an idealized narration of history, and myth a religious belief or a sacred history. Part of the appeal of Leyendas de Guatemala stems from the exploitation of both legend and myth towards the fulfillment of an artistic goal. Our discussion of the final section "Cuculcán" will continue to show the unity of the book and how myth too is used further as a subject for Asturias' legends. In doing so, we hope to reveal more information on the formation of both myth and legend, and thus continue our exposure of the nature and function of legend and myth.

When the same approach used so far in determining the structure of Leyendas de Guatemala is applied to "Cuculcán", we find that in spite of the fact that this "leyenda" takes the form of a drama, there exists between it and the introductory "leyendas" the same basic structural relationships as in the rest of the book. The subject is mythical, with the plot of a three-way love affair between the lord of the sun, Cuculcán, the beautiful maiden, Yaí, and another lover, El Guerrero Amarillo. As the story develops, it in fact reveals the process of how a myth is formed, since it enacts the popular Maya-Quiché myth of the formation of the moon and the stars. The use of this sacred history exclusively as subject does not preclude the author's involvement with legend, for, during the course of the drama, portions of that history are narrated, idealized and distorted to form legend, as in the narrations of past events about the moon by two generations of moon goddesses, Yaí, and La Abuela de los Remiendos.

Finally, the subject matter of the drama may itself provide a subject for legends. Indeed, as we shall see in our third chapter, the myth enacted in "Cuculcán" provides much of the background upon which the legends of Leyendas de Guatemala are based.

The drama is not divided into acts or scenes, but rather into periods of time. The implied journey of the sun across the sky brings accompanying changes in the colour of the back-drops to the scene of action, so that the yellow curtain of the morning changes to the red curtain of the evening, then to the black curtain representing night. The curtain changes imply changes of the scene; and, additionally, the progression from morning to evening, to night implies a larger structural division consisting of one day, at the end of which, the sequence of curtain changes is renewed. The entire drama is divided into three of these larger structural units, thus effecting a very close connection between the structure of the drama, and the orderly passage of time. Great attention is therefore given to chronological time, since the protagonist is the sun god himself, whose deliberate movements in the sky, mark the divisions of the drama.[14] The plot of "Cuculcán", according to this structure, lasts only three days, but the events narrated in it extend for much longer periods of time. For example, the tale of the revolt of the moon goddess and episodes from Yaí's childhood, because they deal with the gods, represent broad sweeps of legendary time. Therefore, the two-fold view of time, and the distortion of it which we saw in "Guatemala" and in "Ahora que me acuerdo", and which we have just seen in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", also recur in "Cuculcán".

The careful consideration which time receives in "Cuculcán" develops alongside an opposing concept of it held by Guacamayo, who, after taking drugs to relieve his tooth-ache, constantly attempts to prove this

world a fiction, by implying that the vision of the drunk is the real vision: "cuando está borracho, ve las cosas como son" (p. 96). Indeed, his strange philosophy about time, is that it does not exist, and that even life itself is an illusion:

> . . . ¡Nada existe, Chinchibirín, todo es sueño en el espejismo inmóvil sólo la luz que cambia al paso de Cuculcán que va de la mañana a la tarde, de la tarde a la noche, de la noche a la mañana, hace que nos sintamos vivos! ¡La vida es un engaño demasiado serio para que tú lo entiendas, Chinchibirín! (p. 92)

Eventually, the validity of time is seriously questioned with his mocking rhetoric:

> Y de qué le sirve ser como el Sol, acucuác, si en su palacio la existencia es engaño de los sentidos, como en el palacio del Sol: espejismo en el que todo es pasajero y nada cierto. (p. 90)

His mockery of Cuculcán, the sun god, and his intent on seducing Yaí the moon goddess to think like him, seems to be the express aim of Guacamayo, which he attains at the climax of the plot, when, by means of trickery and magic, he has the sun and the moon, Cuculcán and Yaí, spinning around and around in the dance of the "girasol". The dance symbolizes a disruption of the normal course of the movement of the sun in the sky, indicating, in a way, that time has been effectively distorted, into legendary time, and is an illusion.

Unlike the treatment of content of the other "leyendas", there is no attempt to relate the subject of "Cuculcán" directly to a geological history, as is done in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", or to a more traceable history as was done with the "Leyendas"; nor is there even a direct attempt to link the drama to an environment which can be recognized easily as Guatemala's. This is because the plot of the drama is based entirely on myth and sacred stories which hardly need trans-

formation by the artistic techniques used elsewhere in the book. In addition, the narration of other sacred stories within the main plot by La Abuela de los Remiendos is reminiscent of the narrative structure of "Guatemala" which is also a compound of several stories. "Guatemalá" is therefore to be seen as serving a function as an introduction to "Cuculcán", a function, moreover, which it also shares with the introductory "leyenda","Ahora que me acuerdo", since that tale and "Cuculcán" are both ultimately concerned with myth, and the same mythological person Kulkulkán.

In this general area of content, also, there is cohesion with the other sections of the book in that mythical themes and figures, first introduced in earlier "leyendas", reappear in "Cuculcán". Apart from being the mythical base for the story of "Ahora que me acuerdo", Cuculcán the great lord of the drama, bears the name of another Mayan legendary ruler, who is referred to as chieftain in "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido". Guacamayo, another figure from the drama, is referred to indirectly in "Leyenda del Volcán",and is mentioned,specifically,in the fifth section of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral",as one of the gods of that settlement. Many other divine characters from "Cuculcán", including Cuculcán himself, Yaí, Chinchibirín, and La Abuela de los Remiendos, share with El Maestro Almendro, one of the protagonists from "Leyendas", a common origin in El Lugar de la Abundancia, the Edenic gardens of the Mayan genesis. In this way, direct links are established, not only with the introductory "leyendas", but between all sections of the work, a fact which is very significant from the point of view of total structural unity, but even more so in that it identifies these myths, like the legends of "Leyendas" as belonging to the country Guatemala.

Establishing the structural unity of the whole of Leyendas de Guatemala proves vitally important in our analysis of "Cuculcán", for here, where the subject is a myth which can have universal application, its links, with "Leyendas" and with the two introductory "leyendas", help to confirm the identity of the mythic content of "Cuculcán" as belonging to Guatemala and its indigenous Maya-Quiché traditions.

"Cuculcán" adds another dimension in the understanding of legend and myth, by showing how beliefs about the supernatural can become idealized as folklore, and legend. The legend concerned relates how the moon and the stars were first launched into the sky (see Chapter III, p. 102.) In the drama, the details of these events are enacted according to Maya-Quiché mythical beliefs. Meanwhile, by tracing earlier events in the subplots, Asturias demonstrates that they are preliminary stages of events about to acquire legendary status. The plot is a myth enacted in such a way that time also is made to conform, so that mythic dimensions, and general decor, the scenery, and even the characters, conform. Thus, animals become characters, masks are worn to imitate the physical appearance of the Maya-Quiché gods, music and dancing often occur, and, the bright colours of the garments, and other uses of special colours, emphasize the supernatural beliefs associated with the same myths. An important aspect of myth that may be emphasized here is its function as adornment to the subject that is being transformed into legend. The practise of using elements of symbolic religious significance is relatively important even in the drama where already myth is accepted as the subject of the legend. The importance of this adorning role of myth was of greater significance in the preceeding stories, especially in the "Leyendas" where mythic symbols such as the colours, red, white, black and green, the cardinal points,

and certain animals such as the snake and the iguana were used to confer qualities of the supernatural and of the traditional folk tale on a historical subject, which, in its fundamentals, does not deal with myth.

A summary of the findings of our analysis of Leyendas de Guatemala hinges mainly upon the links between the introductory "leyendas" and the other sections of the work which reveal a common approach to legend and to myth. A supernatural atmosphere, a distortion of time, and a common subject contained in the different sections are the basic elements which determine the relationship, the role and the importance of legend and myth. An unusual atmosphere, once established in the first two "leyendas", introduces a legendary world as an idealized interpretation of history or myth, then dominates in the other sections of the book. This may be demonstrated appropiately by the treatment of time, introduced from the beginning as a narration in one day of events which span centuries of history. Increasing involvement with the supernatural is a further characteristic of the development of the subject matter. From "Guatemala" it is ascertained that the work will concentrate on topics from pre-Columbian and Colonial Guatemala. In "Leyendas", the focus on the subject matter with which legend is formed is on the pre-Columbian and Colonial periods of Guatemala's history. With "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", the emphasis shifts to very early pre-Columbian geological history transformed into myth. "Cuculcán" in turn, concentrates on myth, largely unrelated to considerations of historical time. Therefore, the structure of Leyendas de Guatemala in terms of the worlds of myth and legend is very definite: A world consisting predominantly of legend gives way to one of legend and myth, indicating as the work progresses deeper involvement with, and greater commitment to myth. At the same time, the

work is concerned with Guatemala's history, incorporating for each period, a vision of some of its myths. Legend therefore becomes, in Leyendas de Guatemala, a written artistic creation fashioned out of a nucleus of history and sacred history; and myth, as sacred history or as a religious belief, may stand alone as the subject of one of the tales, or may offer supernatural adornment to the legends.

NOTES

[1] See Robert C. West and John P. Anguelli, Middle America, its Lands and Peoples. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1966), p. 40.

[2] All quotations from the text of Leyendas de Guatemala and reference to Asturias' own notes on the text are indicated by page references in parentheses from the following edition: Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras Completas, prologue by José María Souvirón, I (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968).

[3] See Morley, The Ancient Maya, pp. 40-56.

[4] Although the exact date of the establishment of the first printing press in Guatemala is debated, during the Colonial period Guatemala was renowned as one of the intellectual centres of Spanish America. See Lawrence S. Thompson, Printing in Colonial Spanish America, Archon Books, (Hamden Corp.: The Shoe String Press Inc., 1962) pp. 66-75.

[5] See below pages 64-83 for further discussion of this topic.

[6] Les Dieux, les héros et les hommes de l'ancien Guatemala, d'après le livre du Conseil, a translation of the Popol Vuh with an Introduction by Georges Raynand (Paris: Ecole pratique des hautes études. Sciences réligeuses, 1925), pp. II - III. Raynaud refers to this belief as based in what he terms "le mirage oriental", a phenomenon common to many religions which gives special significance to the east, because the sun rises there, thus, heat, light and hence life is believed to have originated in the east, the direction towards the Caribbean sea coast, which faces Honduras, Yucatán and Guatemala, countries inhabited by Mayans.

[7] See Charles S. Braden, Religious Aspect of the Conquest of Mexico (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1930), pp. 278-308. This study deals mainly with Mexico but it also includes information on Guatemala, and indicates the form of Catholicism mixed with non-Christian beliefs which many Indians of Middle America adopted.

[8] See Charles Gibson, The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810 (Stanford, California; Stanford University Press; 1964), pp. 28-29.

[9] Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Historia verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España, Vol. II (5th Ed. Mexico: Edición Porrua, S.A. 1960), pp. 125-126. See also Cristóbal Colón, Los cuatro viajes del Almirante y su testamento, ed. y prólogo de Ignacio B. Ancoátegui, Colección Austral (4th ed.; Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1964), p. 42.

[10] See Mario Rosenthal, Guatemala (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1962), pp. 60-71.

[11] See Morley, The Ancient Maya, pp. 80-87.

12 There is a reference in Middle American mythic history to at least five creations and destructions. See Augustín Yáñez, Mitos Indígenas, Biblioteca del Estudiante Universitario (3rd ed., México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1964), pp. 6-15.

13 F.J. Monkhouse, Principles of Physical Geography (5th Ed., London: University of London Press Ltd., 1962), p. 204, outlines some reasons for historical temperature changes, and pages 252-253 for changes in the mean level of the sea over the centuries.

14 See below pages 94-97 in our discussion on the world of myth for further discussion on the sacred colours related to the myth of the sun god.

C H A P T E R II

THE WORLD OF LEGEND AND IMAGINATION

In our first chapter, through an analysis of the structural characteristics of Leyendas de Guatemala, we were concerned with establishing the nature and function of legend and myth in these tales written by Asturias. The analysis permitted us to define some of the bases upon which Asturias' fictional world operates, the greater part of our discussion being centered on his consistent treatment of such elements as time and dream, while some discussion of subject matter was also included. Having established the role of legend and myth, we can conclude that legend, or the imaginative process in the creation of legend from history and sacred history, acquires vital importance to an appreciation of Asturias' world. Therefore, it is now relevant to examine that aspect of his work in this chapter, leaving as the subject of the following chapter his treatment of myth, which we consider to be the other core element in his work.

In a consideration of the legendary aspects of Leyendas de Guatemala, it is relevant to recall the definition of the term legend established in our "Introduction" (see page 5), where we defined it as referring principally to traditional folk tales, distorted or idealized narrations of historical or supernatural events. At the same time, however, the legendary aspects of the work were seen to refer specifically to a creative process in which the author invented substitutes for the oral tradition thereby using his own initiative to transform these events into legend. Insofar as in our first chapter we have already seen how the introductory "leyendas", "Guatemala" and "Ahora que

me acuerdo", have been used to present the stories of Leyendas de Guatemala as the visions of Guatemalans, perceived through dreams and drugs, in the present chapter we will be concerned principally with the literary character which legend acquires, by examining some of the ways in which Asturias' style adapts itself to the process of image creation in the written folk tale. In doing so, we will focus on aspects of two stylistic features of Asturias' work, his imitation of characteristics of pre-Columbian literature, and his portrayal of the supernatural by means of stylistic elements similar to the techniques of surrealism.

It is no coincidence that the juxtaposition of themes from pre-Columbian and Colonial Guatemalan history, shown in our earlier discussion to be so important, is here paralleled by the use of a style which can be interpreted in terms of both European and Middle American literature. In the legendsof both literatures it is not uncommon to encounter descriptions of a state of altered consciousness in which recur the elements of dream and drugged hypersensitivity that are so relevant in Leyendas de Guatemala. Moreover, certain characteristics of language and imagery are common to both literary styles regardless of the vast chronological separation, and their use in Leyendas de Guatemala achieves the goal of transforming the subject into folklore. A very close similarity exists between the language of pre-Columbian writings producing striking images through unusual word associations and based on the divine and magical power of the word,[1] and the surrealist image, which capitalizes on the effects of magic, dreams, and a drugged hypersensitivity.[2] In fact, the two predominating influences on Asturias at the time of his conception of Leyendas de Guatemala were the pre-Columbian writings of Middle America, and the predominant

members of the French surrealist movement.[3]

I ASPECTS OF PRE-COLUMBIAN LITERATURE:

The fascination Miguel Angel Asturias had for the indigenous writings of Middle America led him to undertake the translation of several of its best known works (see above, Introduction, Note 4). Undoubtedly, such deep involvement with indigenous writings influenced his personal style, for many of the techniques commonly used in those works are to be found in Leyendas de Guatemala, including some that are considered to have been developed independently in the traditional Maya-Quiché mode of expression and subsequently adopted into Nahuatl literature when it was eventually written. According to the pre-Columbian tradition as we shall see, language is sacred, and is characterized by mystery and riddle, the metaphor being so elaborately developed that it is regarded almost as a separate literary technique called "disfrasismo". Other major characteristics are: repetition, used in refrains to stress one particular idea by insisting on key words and phrases; and parallelism, a technique of balancing whole ideas or sentences one against the other.[4]

In so far as the structure of Leyendas de Guatemala is concerned, we have seen that the introductory "Ahora que me acuerdo" and "Guatemala", and the group of five "leyendas" have an overall cohesion. Consequently, in our discussion on style, the two sections will be examined together in order to determine the extent to which the introductory section first exploits the style which is to pervade the whole work, and the extent to which the section "Leyendas" implements that style in the creation of a legendary world.

The most striking single stylistic factor of Leyendas de Guatemala is the power of the word, which, as an element of indigenous style, is based both on the belief that the ability to name something is to conquer it, and on the concept that poetry is created when words are artistically associated for the first time.[5] The idea is introduced early, with the sentence, in "Guatemala", "Las fantasmas son las palabras de la eternidad" (p. 22), which immediately precedes the succession of visions of the cities from the past. This striking image, proposing visions as one important medium of communication with eternity, begins a series of vivid images which recur in "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo" as an indication of the style to come. Thus, in the fleeting glimses of historical Guatemala, the idea of nannies, and of enlightened story-tellers, fascinating others with their fairy tales, is the object of an image about legend. "La ciudad alejose por las calles cantando" (p. 24), suggests the very essence of what legend is all about, that is, that in the folk tales about the people of Tikal told by various elders, the recollection of episodes, from the now abandoned cities, progresses easily from one to the next, and fades, as inadvertently as the strains of a song. One of the many interpretations of this image is the implication that legend idealizes people, places and events, and eventually transforms them into memories. In the first samples of the style of Asturias, mere words, therefore, seem to acquire the potency of magic in his written folk tales about the buried cities of Guatemala; that is, he creates legend through his choice of words. This is exactly what seems to be happening when, in describing cities from the period of European exploration in America, he refers to "Siete ciudades de Cibola construidas en las nubes de un pais

de oro" (p. 24). By punning on the word "nubes", Asturias transforms the Cities of Cíbola into legendary cities, since their physical existence appears as fictional as the stories, circulated among the explorers of the sixteenth century, about the enormous quantities of gold they contained (p. 1061). As a matter of fact, a quotation from "Guatemala" can be found which seems to summarize this aspect of Asturias' style, that is, his method of creating legend through the imaginative use of words: "La memoria es una ciega que en los bultos va encontrando el camino" (p. 24). The comparison refers once again to the process of reviving legendary scenes from the distant past, for indeed, tales about the past, that are transmitted by memory perpetrate a certain degree of distortion, since the reliance on memory makes distortion of detail inevitable, as in the gropings of a blind person.

A similar use of images is also apparent in "Ahora que me acuerdo" in the description of the forests entered by Cuero de Oro, while the visions of his journey through time are being presented. As in the other instances, the images are related to legend in that words and ideas that are rarely associated, are linked to form striking metaphors which create fantasy and magic and transform ordinary events into legend. The idea is best illustrated by following the gradual transformation of the forest into a legendary object. While Cuero de Oro passes through, as in a procession of patriarchs, the trees press around him, and "Los árboles caen como moscas en la telaraña de las malezas infranqueables" (p. 30). Then, because of the undulation of its foliage, the forest is described as converted into a malleable, boneless mass and, eventually, the whole terrifying scenery becomes to him a gigantic hyperbole: "Numerosas generaciones de hombres se arrancaron la piel para

enfundar la selva" (p. 32).

From the introductory "leyendas" we find then that even the language used independently conveys legendary characteristics when in relating the events of the stories, magical and supernatural qualities are inferred from ordinary objects. In addition, these examples of the fantastic images derived from unusual word associations may serve to introduce the first technique Asturias shares with Nahautl poetry. "Disfrasismo", as the technique is called, is the pairing of two metaphors to express a single thought.[6] A good example is to be found in "Guatemala" when Asturias uses the device to emphasize his vision of the Guatemalan city:

> Es una ciudad formada de ciudades enterradas, superpuestas, como los pisos de una casa de altos. Ciudad sobre ciudad. ¡Libro de estampas viejas, empastado en piedra con páginas de oro de Indias, de pergaminos españoles y de papel republicano! (p. 22)

The suggestion is that the city is formed from buried cities one superimposed on the other, like the separate floors of a high-rise building, or as a second comparison, like the golden pages of a book of stone. Both images in their own way, help to transform and idealize the city, identifying it as a subject of folk tales. A further example of "disfrasismo" comes from "Ahora que me acuerdo", where again Asturias describes the density of the forests and the beauty of sunlight trickling through the undergrowth. The individual species of plants are selected and transformed into a suitable subject for legend by this exotic description:

> Líquenes espesos acorazaban los troncos de las ceibas. Los robles más altos ofrecian orquídeas a las nubes que el sol acababa de violar y ensangrentar en el crepúsculo. El culantrillo simulaba una lluvia de esmeraldas en el cuello carnoso de los cocos. Los pinos estaban hechos de pestañas de mujeres románticas. (pp. 32-33)

When we come to the section "Leyendas", we find that the technique of "disfrasismo" is sustained and that equally fine examples of daring images are again used to transform ordinary objects into the fantastic subject of a legend. A single example from each "leyenda" may suffice to substantiate the claim. In "Leyenda del Volcán", this vivid image depicts the unnatural turbulence of the elements in which the companions of Nido perish. The double image, created partly by comparing the stars to fire, and partly through personification achieves its effect:

> Las estrellas cayeron sin mojarse las pestañas en la visión del mar. Cayeron en las manos de la tierra, mendiga ciega que no sabiendo que eran estrellas, por no quemarse, las apagó. (p. 40)

The pious thoughts of the novice in "Leyenda del Cadejo" at the moment when she overcomes her terror at the loss of her lock of hair gives a most uncanny image which almost becomes a separate legend in itself. The novice is so atrophied that she has the sensation of being long since dead; then, with a pun on the word "aterrada" (p. 44), she becomes earth and her words white roses which adorn the Holy Virgin:

> Se sentía muerta; se sentía aterrada, sentía que en su tumba --el vistido de huerfana que ella llenaba de tierra con su ser-florecían rosales de palabras blancas, y poco a poco su congoja se hizo alegría de sosegado asento ... Las monjas --rosales ambulantes-- cortábanse las rosas unas a otras para adornar las altares de la Virgen, y de las rosas brotaba el mes de mayo, temblando como una mosca de luz. (p. 44)

A storm is the object of this elaborate simile in "Leyenda de la Tatuana" when, on yet another occasion, an ordinary lightning storm is given the trimmings of a folk tale:

> los primeros relámpagos iluminaron el paisaje como los foganazos de un fotógrafo loco que tomase instantáneas de tormenta. (p. 50)

Similarly, to the eccentric monk of "Leyenda del Sombrerón", the pelota

jumps about "como un pensamiento" (p. 56). And, in the volcanic eruption of "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", "las islas temblaban en las aguas conmovidas, como manos de brujos extendidas hacia el Volcán" (p. 63). As the selected examples show, each of the stories demonstrates the power of the word, and of extraordinary word associations, in creating fantastic images, which together locate Asturias' often mundane subject matter in the world of legend and imagination.

In addition to the compound metaphors, and daring word associations, the solemn litany of the style characteristic of pre-Columbian writings is equally evident. To illustrate this, we refer to an entire passage which is to be found copied from Asturias' own translation of Georges Raynaud's French version of the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Maya-Quiché people. In "Ahora que me acuerdo", a religious tone predominates as Cuero de Oro listens to the same prayer which the first fore-fathers of the Quiché learned from the lips of their creator gods. The religious associations of this style, its use of repetition and of the second person plural help to convey the idea of the supernatural and confirm the whole scene as belonging to a legend:

> ¡Salud, oh constructores, oh formadores! Vosotros veis. Vosotros escucháis. ¡Vosotros! No nos abandonéis, no nos dejéis, ¡oh, dioses!, en el cielo, sobre la tierra, Espíritu del cielo, Espíritu de la tierra. Dadnos nuestra descendencia, nuestra posteridad, mientras haya días, mientras haya albas. Que la germinación se haga. Que el alba se haga. Que numerosos sean los verdes caminos, las verdes sendas que vosotros nos dais. Que tranquilas, muy tranquilas estén las tribus. Que perfectas, muy perfectas sean las tribus. Que perfecta sea la vida, la existencia que nos dais ...[7]
> (p. 30)

The prayer, using repetition to great advantage, introduces it as a subsequent key stylistic device, although only in "Cuculcán" is a similar religious tone evoked to the same extent.

A related device referred to in Spanish as the use of "palabras broches", or the repetition of key words or phrases, was common in pre-Columbian writings.[8] It is adopted, with variations, on several occasions, by Asturias, in the process of legend formation. In "Ahora que me acuerdo", emphasis on darkness, on mystery, and on the chaos of the fantastic scenes, is attained by the recurrence of the phrase "Noche delirante" (pp. 31 to 33). The repetition acts as a constant reminder of the background to the drama being enacted. A similar effect is achieved in "Guatemala" by the repetition of the sentence, "el Cuco de los Sueños va hilando los cuentos" (pp. 22 - 27). In addition to serving as a structural link uniting the series of seemingly disconnected scenes, the sentence is a constant reminder that those scenes belong to a world of dream. In fact, this type of repetition, which is related to an oral tradition, performs the function of a poetic refrain by emphasizing aspects of the theme, and suggesting a certain rhythm and symmetry to the story, as though it is being narrated orally. The use of this technique in the written "leyenda" is regarded as an attempt on the part of the author to substitute for the oral tradition of the folk tale.

The stories in the section "Leyendas" reveal a continuation of the exploitation of the oral tradition of the Indians through repetition, which gives to Asturias' world of legend and imagination, the semblance of being an oral narration. "Leyenda del Volcán" for example, in describing the scene of utter confusion in the forests, uses repetition to gain vividness and immediacy:

> Huían los coyotes, desnudando los dientes en la sombra al rozarse unos con otros . . .
>
> Huían los camaleones, cambiando de colores por el miedo; . . .

> Huían los cantiles seguidos de las víboras de cascabel . . .
>
> Huían los camaleones, huían las dantas, huían los basiliscos, que en ese tiempo mataban con la mirada; . . . (pp. 39 - 40)

In addition to the example of repetition, in "Leyenda del Volcán", there is a most elaborate example of parallelism, also a characteristic of style in ancient Middle American documents which derives from the oral nature of the narrative. The device, called "synthetic parallelism" (paralelismo sintético), in this instance consists of the paralleling of the two sentences "Los tres que venían en el agua . . ." and "los tres que venían en el viento . . .". Since the example to which we refer has already been analyzed by Eladia León Hill,[9] we will not discuss it here but will comment further on the techniques of parallelism in the course of our discussion of "Cuculcán" (see below, pp. 61 - 63).

There being little evidence of repetition or of other attempts at imitating oral techniques in "Leyenda del Cadejo", our next example of this technique comes from "Leyenda de la Tatuana", where the refrain "Caminín caminito" (pp. 47 - 48), repeated by the doves, increases the mystery surrounding the legend of the soul of El Maestro Almendro, as it travels in the four cardinal directions. Later, a new refrain, "¿Cuántas lunas pasaron andando los caminos?" (p. 51) occurs when El Maestro himself wanders in search of his lost soul. While maintaining the oral tradition the refrain insists, perhaps, on the passing of that immeasurable time which characterizes this legendary world. In "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", a much more elaborate use of a refrain seems to give, as in a drama, the stage directions to its action. When the Spaniards first arrive, ready to attack the Indians, the text resounds to the refrain, "Avanzaban sin clarines, sin pasos, sin tambores"

(p. 62); but, when battle commences, the refrain appears in a slightly varied form: "Los hombres blancos avanzaban sin clarines, sin pasos, sin tambores" (p. 62); then when the Indians are routed, there is yet another variation: "¡Sonaban los clarines, sonaban los tambores!" (pp. 62 - 63); finally, when everyone perishes in the volcanic erruption, the refrain changes appropriately to: "¡Callaron los clarines! ¡Callaron los tambores!" (p. 63). The technique of repetition here serves to dramatize the action, adding to the vividness of the narrative by contributing the important detail of sound. In a similar way, the phrase, "¡Tan liviana, tan ágil, tan blanca!" (pp. 56 - 57), as if it were a stage direction , indicates the activity sustained throughout the story when it is repeated as key words in "Leyenda del Sombrerón" to portray the ceaseless bouncing of the "pelota".

Two basic methods of creating legend are discernible so far. On the one hand are the various devices associated with imagery that are adapted to the author's purpose so that supernatural qualities are conferred upon the objects and events of the stories, thus giving them legendary status. On the other hand, the process of creating legend involves an attempt to retain semblances of the oral narrative form within the written "leyenda", and thus maintain as much as possible this traditional aspect of Guatemala's folk tales. Once again, many of the literary devices, that are to be found in the existing samples of pre-Columbian expression, are reproduced in the introductory stories and in the stories of the "Leyendas". To what extent this trend continues in the rest of the book remains to be explored in the ensuing analysis.

In the second half of Leyendas de Guatemala, containing "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán", where inanimate

objects, plants, animals, minerals, mortals and gods are given equal status, style is perhaps no longer as important in creating legend, as in the first half, on account of the mythical subject matter of the two stories. Nevertheless, many of the same basic elements of literary techniques, which we have already associated with the pre-Columbian tradition, prevail in the creation of images as further adornment to the myth. Several examples will illustrate how "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", like the earlier "leyendas", depends for its effect on the use of striking and unusual images which transform ordinary objects into legend by giving them the aura of mystery and fantasy. The comparisons include various subjects: "Las raíces habían asistido al entierro de las cometas" (p. 67); "Un río de pájaros desembocaba en cada fruta" (p. 67). The images created include those of "piedras hablantes" (p. 70), "nubes subterráneas" (p. 71); and that of the sun which, "lejos de herir, se esponja como una gallina"(p. 77). These examples are deliberately chosen at random throughout the leyenda to indicate how, in the process of transformation, Asturias gives the impression that the total environment in which the stories evolve is being affected, since its elements, as varied as the roots, the fruits, the birds, the stones, the clouds, and even the sun, have all become objects from a folk tale. The change in the surroundings is so complete, that as a result, the relationships between the different elements are altered, also, to permit a situation such as that of a messenger river journeying to the seaport, with greetings from the high inland mountains. The description of its reception upon arrival affords a further elaboration of the new relationships "... lo saludaron palabras canoras en pedacitos de viento envueltos en plumas de colores" (p. 76). A

similar unusual relationship, among the various elements of the legendary environment in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", becomes evident when the activities of another river are referred to:

> El río entró jugando con las arenas blancas de una playa que, como alfombra, habían tendido para él esa mañana los pájaros marinos. (p. 76)

The transformation of the Guatemalan environment into a world of legend seems to continue when we examine further "disfrasismo", a device already associated with the pre-Columbian tradition, in our analysis of the process of the formation of legend in the preceding "leyendas". "Disfrasismo" is encountered where ordinary caves are converted:

> Las serpientes estornudaban azufre, eran interminables intestinos subterráneos que salían a flor de tierra, a manera de fauces abiertos. (p. 77)

Two metaphors, that of the serpent and that of the intestine, are used to convey the single image of long, dark, and sinuous caverns, a reference to the mythical "Lieux des Cavernes",[10] endowing those "cavernas-serpientes" (p. 77), with movement and life. Similarly, in order to present the world of legend and imagination in its entirety, the focus is shifted in "Cuculcán" to the profound silence of the skies, the abode of the gods. The technique employed, is related to the double comparison of "disfrasismo", but involves as well the obscure metaphor. One of the characters, Guacamayo, succeeds in confusing even the gods while at the same time conveying some aspects of the unusual character of this environment, due to the strange relationships now existing among its various elements, namely, silence, noise or echoes, and sandals:

> El silencio rodeaba la vida. Era insufrible el silencio y los Creadores dejaron sus sandalias para significar que no estaban ausentes de los cielos. Sus sandalias o ecos. Pero el Guacamayo, jugando con las palabras, confundió los dioses. (p. 123)

There are two indications of the divine presence in the sky: the sandals of the gods are used figuratively to refer either to their footprints, or to the echoes of their footsteps. A second possible combination of meanings might refer to the echoes either of voices or of footsteps. Regardless of these variations, the point is made that the reader is left with different interpretations of an image such as this. Meanwhile, another quality of Asturias' legend is revealed by his reproduction of the mystery that is also characteristic of the language of Nahuatl poetry, where the meaning of a metaphor is often attained only after much reflection.[11] The overall outcome of this device is a description of another dimension of the world of legend that is vague enough to require the reader to use his imagination to complete the picture.

In this second half of Leyendas de Guatemala, in the abode of the gods, where magical and supernatural occurrences are the norm, there is less dependence on literary techniques to impose a superficial atmosphere of fantasy. However, these techniques do occur for other reasons, for example, the technique of repetition, which is significant because it retains the oral pre-Columbian tradition in the legend. In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" repetition really is not an important part of the literary technique. Nevertheless, one example can be found in the recurrence of "algo pasó" (p. 68), used in order to indicate that periodically, other unknown activities occur in the thick forests in addition to the activities of Juan and Juana Poyé. However, repetition attains its best effect in "Cuculcán", when, as the series of examples taken from a seemingly sacrificial ceremony will show, the choral recitation of repetitious

chants complements the scene where the maiden Yaí waits to offer herself in sacrifice to Cuculcán. As the action proceeds, the ritual ceremony of the Tortugas is performed, so that the two scenes merge into one sacrificial ceremony, with the victim, the god, the priest and the participating audience all present. During that ceremony of the first night, Bárbara Barbada directs the chant in the role of the head priest, and while, in the course of the ritual, she recites her call, the rhythmic response of a chorus of Tortugas is heard: "¡A . . . já, já. . . . , A . . . já, já. Bárbara Barbada!" (p. 108). Rhythm and the effects of alliteration in the reply, enhance the sense of magic of the ritual. Again, as in the "Leyendas", the use of repetition, in religious chants such as this, reinforces the oral character of the written story with the implication that its status as legend is enhanced. Moreover, the rhythmic quality of the style which often predominates as a result, reproduces another one of the general aspects of Nahuatl poetry.[12]

The rhythmic and oral effects induced by the use of repetition in this scene is in fact enhanced by the incidence of parallelism that is also present. It occurs when the "Chumpamieles", insects, of different colours, red, yellow, brown and black join the ritual. Although the exact meaning of the words they repeat is hard to grasp, that is of little consequence. What is significant, however, is the structure of the sentences which varies slightly according to the colour of the group of insects which reply, but still maintains a balance between the sentences, and even between the paragraphs. Because the rhythm of both call and response combined reproduce the effects of a religious chant, we are left with the impression that animals are important participants of the religion. Another element

in the process of legend creation is therefore revealed, as a suggestion of the supernatural is introduced, mainly through style, while some indication of the importance of animals to this religion is also given. These consequences are illustrated further in another incidence of parallelism in "Cuculcán", caused when another chant is formed by a chorus of animals in response to the call of their leader:

> ¡Savia que pulsas en lo hondo la reja de raíces en que vela el amor! Lentitud de ave que pasea en hermoso vuelo! ¡No me deis la sabiduria, sino el hechizo! ¡No las alas, sino lo que resulta de su movimiento! (p. 150)

Parallelism results from the similarity in structure of the last two negatival commands in the speech of the leader. It later becomes a deliberate pattern, when this part of its utterings is turned into a refrain by a chorus of Tortugas:

> ¡No me deis el amor, sino el hechizo! ¡No la savia sino lo que resulta de su movimiento! (p. 150)

Immediately afterwards, Tortuga con Flecos takes over; her recital follows the pattern of the speech of the first leader and she also ends with the same pattern which has now become a refrain:

> ¡No me deis la sabiduria, sino el hechizo! ¡No la sangre, sino lo que resulta de su movimiento! (p. 150)

In answer to three separate calls from a lead Tortuga, a refrain is made, with responses from the chorus of Tortugas, consisting of two sentences, each having the same pattern, but with a few words changed to alter the meaning, and avoid the possible monotony that might result from the frequent repetition. For an overview of the whole technique, balance is at various levels: within the refrain, there is the balance of the two negatival commands as seen above; then, there is balance in the similarity of structure in the different calls of the two

leaders; finally, symmetry exists in the alternation of the verses spoken by the leaders, which parallel each other structurally, each one followed by an almost identical chorus from the group of Tortugas. The total effect of the ritual then is to steep the drama further in folklore by giving it qualities of the supernatural and of the oral tradition, which are characteristics of the legend.

As a "leyenda" in the form of the drama, "Cuculcán", has special significance in relation to an oral tradition. By using this form Asturias has produced a legend in which the protagonists appear in person to act out the drama. As the plot unfolds, therefore, legend is created, becoming, in this instance, an immediate, on-going invention. It is generally accepted that in the literature of Guatemala as a whole, and indeed of Spanish America, it is only in the drama that the most ancient traditions of the regions are to a large extent maintained.[13] Hence, it is not surprising that great advantage is taken of the opportunity offered by "Cuculcán" to reproduce the pre-Columbian traditions. Consequently, distinct characteristics of the pre-Columbian drama, music, dance and the adornment of characters in brightly coloured costumes are all characteristics that idealize and adorn the events of "Cuculcán"; and indeed, these same characteristics have earned for the Indian Theatre of Spanish America, the title of "ballet drama".[14] A ceremony of the Tortugas, therefore, has the music of reed pipes and "ocarinas" as background. The battle scene takes the form of a performance of the Mayan war dance, during which the antagonists shoot arrows at each other. The climax of the drama, where time is distorted, sees Cuculcán and Yaí together perform the ritual dance of the "girasol" as they both spin in opposite directions, while reciting the words of an

endecasyllabic poem. Finally, the changes of the scenes are indicated by changes in the colour of the curtains, a phenomenon which is based on a Mayan religious belief, to be discussed in our chapter on mythology, which associates certain colours with the principal cardinal points and with a particular god. The use of bright colours and decoration is apparent throughout this drama, as indicated by the description of the costumes used. For example, in the morning Cuculcán is completely covered in yellow, and the action unfolds before a yellow curtain; in the afternoon, the colour of his costume changes like that of the curtain to red; and in the evening, in order for his costume to correspond to the black curtain, he is seen undressing. Such aspects of adornment as the masks, and the brightly coloured feathers, especially those of Guacamayo, copy the characteristic features of pre-Columbian drama, and confer on the whole work, the supernatural qualities of the Maya-Quiché religion.

II SUPERNATURAL ASPECTS OF ASTURIAS' STYLE RELATED TO SURREALISM

Having seen some of the techniques of style in Leyendas de Guatemala derived from characteristics prevalent in pre-Columbian literature, it is now relevant to consider some of the ways in which Asturias' work resembles that of surrealist writers through his attempts to establish the supernatural in the legends. In doing so, one should recall the circumstances of the conception of Leyendas de Guatemala through the technique of automatic composition, when Asturias used the theme of Middle American Indian mythology as subject matter for several "leyendas" he recited among a group of surrealist friends in France.[15] Our intention, then, in this section of our thesis, is to consider aspects of the

supernatural introduced by Asturias in Leyendas de Guatemala, and the devices of magic, dehumanization and semi-consciousness, employed to depict them, which parallel the devices employed in the creation of surrealist images.

It is convenient at this point to indicate a very important difference in the manner in which Asturias manipulates both the pre-Columbian and the surrealist styles to serve his own purposes. In the case of the former, as has been seen, legend consists of a transformation and idealization of ordinary events by the use of intense imagery, daring word associations and other literary techniques borrowed from the pre-Columbian literary tradition; the main thrust of our analysis was to demonstrate how Asturias was able to retain as much as possible of the oral tradition within the written tale. Our consideration of the imaginative use of words concentrated upon Asturias adoption of a style that would best create legend by making ordinary events and objects appear extraordinary and legendary. The ensuing discussions however, will focus on Asturias' legendary style from another perspective. They will attempt to show how, by using techniques which reveal his surrealist influences, Asturias endeavours to render acceptable, myths involving supernatural, magical or fantastic occurrences that might otherwise be dismissed as fairytales. In the final analysis, the ultimate literary effect is the same, for the influence of the surrealist technique of automatic composition evident in Leyendas de Guatemala, appears also to retain the oral tradition in the written work, like many of the techniques already discussed in connection with the pre-Columbian tradition; moreover, the surrealist image can also be regarded as an attempt to give legendary qualities to ordinary objects and events.

We recognize, therefore, the combined effect of both pre-Columbian and surrealist techniques, but having already explored aspects of pre-Columbian literary style used in the creation of legend, it is now convenient to focus on the relevance and importance of the surrealist style in introducing myth to the stories. That is to say, that when surrealist techniques are adopted, it is with the aim of establishing the framework of a supernatural world into which the myths are placed as truth and sacred folk beliefs. The main interest in this section of our analysis is therefore not so much in the language and imagery for their own sakes as in the various techniques used to create that supernatural world.

Magic, the first of these techniques we will consider, is suggested at the very beginning of Leyendas de Guatemala, where sorcery exists by inference, because the güegüechos are identified as sorcerers and even the forests surrounding the town possess magical powers sufficient to bewich it. The stories are therefore introduced as though located within a world of sorcery and magic. Subsequently, the numerous scenes revived from history in "Guatemala" are described in magical terms, and supernatural beings occupy the streets of the town: "Por las calles desiertas vagan sombras perdidas y fantasmas con los ojos vacíos" (p. 24); then, Pedro de Betancourt the confessor, increases in size before the penitent lady, as he becomes transformed by magic into her lost lover, the dashing young soldier Don Rodrigo. "Guatemala", therefore, takes advantage of its magical setting to present history in an altered form, and to introduce myth as for example in the following description of an ancient sacrificial

scene from the town of Quirigua:

> El sacerdote llega; la multitud se aparta. El sacerdote llama a la puerta del templo con su dedo de oro; la multitud se inclina. La multitud lame la tierra para bendecirla. El sacerdote sacrifica siete palomas blancas. Por las pestañas de las Vírgenes pasan vuelos de agonía y la sangre que salpica el cuchillo de chay del sacrificio que tiene la forma del Arbol de la Vida, nimba la testa de los dioses indiferentes y sagrados. (p. 23)

In "Ahora que me acuerdo", a journey through the forests, which is the recollection of a reverse journey through time by Cuero de Oro, and which culminates in his divine transformation, is also an opportunity for an elaborate conversion into a magical experience. In it, surrealist images are effected through fantastic associations, which eventually transform ordinary scenes completely into the subject of a legend. Thus, Cuero de Oro's presence in the midst of the Guatemalan jungle during the night, with the moon striving to penetrate the darkness, becomes a conflict, between the elements around him, for dominance over his personality and disposition:

> El tigre de la luna, el tigre de la noche y el tigre de la dulce sonrisa vinieron a disputar mi vida. Caída el ala de la lechuza, lanzáronse al asalto: (p. 33)

This fervent conflict in the environment for dominance over Cuero de Oro gives the reason for further surrealist associations. For, his importance increases immeasurably as is shown when the description continues:

> pero en el momento de ir garra y colmillo a destrozar la imagen de Dios--yo era en ese tiempo la imagen de Dios--, a la medianoche se enroscó a mis pies y los follajes por donde había pasado reptando

> los caminos, desanillárонse en culebras de cuatro colores subiendo el camino de mi epidermis blando y tibio para el frío raspón de sus escamas. (p. 33)

While Cuero de Oro is being transformed into a deity, he is entangled in the coils of four snakes of different colours, an experience which involves mythical associations from both Christian and Mayan mythology. These examples illustrate how the opportunity is often seized in the rest of the text to introduce mythical elements concurrent with the establishment of a supernatural world, by means of the technique of magic.

The atmosphere of magic, manifest in "Guatemala" and in "Ahora que me acuerdo" as a device for introducing myth, is sustained throughout the section "Leyendas". This atmosphere is perhaps most readily apparent in the first of the five stories, "Leyenda del Volcán", and the last, "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido". In both stories, it is a matter of the description of nature, and of the unusual turbulence of the elements, in magical or in supernatural terms. The creation narrative, and Nido's vision, from "Leyenda del Volcán" are good examples where natural phenomena are transformed. Since the main aim of the passage is to relate the story of Nido's creation, and the apparition of the Saint, the child and the flower to receive him, it becomes necessary to treat the storm in a manner worthy of such legendary occurrences. For indeed, although the vision, with its element of the supernatural, is very characteristic of the folk tale, the storm is not, and so its description is exaggerated to such proportions that it becomes an invisible and magical force capable of self propulsion:

> Las arenas del camino, al pasar él convertíanse en alas, y era de ver cómo a sus espaldas se alzaba al cielo un listón blanco, sin dejar huella en la tierra. (pp. 40-41)

Once magic has been introduced through the medium of the storm, and has been accepted, the groundwork is laid for the more important event which occurs immediately afterwards, that is, the process by which Nido receives material form when his name is pronounced:

> Anduvo y anduvo . . . Adelante un repique circundó los espacios. Las campanas entre las nubes repetían su nombre:
>
> ¡Nido!
>
> ¡Nido! ¡Nido!
>
> ¡Nido!
>
> ¡Nido!
>
> ¡Nido! ¡Nido!
>
> Los árboles se poblaron de nidos. Y vio un santo, una azucena y un niño. Santo, flor y niño, la trinidad le recibía. (p. 41)

In this way, the creation myth is introduced into the story within a general magical setting and by associating one fantastic deed with another. In addition to the related Christian beliefs, the Mayan tradition, as we have seen, also adheres to a belief in supernatural powers inherent in the spoken word, which can be wielded when someone is named. Such a choice of words and a use of imagery to infer magic is consistent with both the surrealist image and with the supernatural and mythic content of the folk tale.

In "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", the magical elements are also conversions of natural turbulence such as earthquakes

and volcanic erruptions, which are portrayed as supernatural interferences in the affairs of men. In two of the "leyendas", magic results when the familiar lock of hair and the "pelota" respectively are transformed into different objects. Nonetheless, in all of the stories, as in many folk tales, a main magical event is the subject for the composition. In "Leyenda del Cadejo", the lock of hair, stolen from the nun becomes a snake associated with evil in her mind and in Christian mythology: "pero al caer su trenza, ya no era trenza se ondulaba sobre el colchoncito de las hostias regadas en el piso" (p. 45); in the meantime, "el hombre-adormidera" is changed into a strange animal. The disappearance of the slave-girl through the power of the tattoo on her arm is the principal magical act in "Leyenda de la Tatuana", and in "Leyenda del Sombrerón" it is the conversion of the "pelota" into a large hat, once again associated with the demon myth:

> La pelota cayó fuera del convento--fiesta de brincos y rebrincos de corderillo en libertad--, y, dando su salto inusitado, abrióse como por encanto en forma de sombrero negro sobre la cabeza del niño, que corría tras ella. Era el sombrero del demonio. (p. 57)

An explanation for these occurrences in surrealist terms is that an identification is made between certain ordinary objects from the conscious world, namely, the "pelota", the child and his hat, with a belief about the demon myth, from the sub-conscious world. The supernatural element is introduced gradually, beginning with the

uncontrollable bouncing of the "pelota", which is not altogether an abnormal occurrence, until it graduates to the sudden conversion of the ball into a demon figure. At this point, beliefs about the supernatural become involved and the subconscious world is introduced. The author therefore incorporates myth into the tales through a mixing of different levels of consciousness as ordinary objects suddenly become associated with and even converted into fantastic beings. Indeed, the magic evident throughout the section "Leyendas" can be explained in this way, since, in all of the stories, a similar process of association and transformation is evident. What Asturias does in effect is to associate his subjects with subconscious religious beliefs, describing them in equally fantastic terms, whether he is dealing with ordinary objects such as a nun's hair, an almond tree, or a "pelota", or whether his subject is some more unusual phenomenon such as a storm, an earthquake, or a volcanic eruption.

Undoubtedly, the technique is akin to that of the surrealist image, that is to say, the transfiguration of the universe by means of the unnatural fusion of separate objects, the destruction of the conventional value of these objects, and, a replacement of this value by a representative one which relates to the psychic life of the viewer.[16] The suggestion of the supernatural and of magic is implied with the use of surrealist techniques which tend towards the equalization of all matter, whereby, for example, the beautiful girl and the material surface on which she lies are regarded as one connected image.[17] Additionally, when one recalls that the supernatural is also a common feature of the folk tale in which it is not unusual for animals and objects to act as characters,[18] it becomes evident that its use in

Leyendas de Guatemala is of particular relevance in introducing myth to a world where legend and imagination are paramount.

In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and in "Cuculcán", the mixing of the conscious and subconscious worlds becomes more intense. Since both "leyendas" are very much involved with myth, and since there is an equalization between plants, minerals, animals, humans and gods, which are all characters, the opportunity is presented for simulating the surrealist image with its idea of the merger of matter with greater ease. For example, La Diosa Invisible de las Palomas de la Ausencia is formed magically when "su reflejo de carne femenina tomó forma de mujer al entrar en las aguas del río mezcladas con la sangre de los hombres del menguante lunar" (p. 76). Consequently, there is great assumption that magic plays a major role in this "leyenda", its presence being distinctly recognized in the mythical world of "los hombres del menguante lunar". "La magia sustituía con símbolos de colores sin mezcla, el dolor de las bestias que perdían las quijadas de tanto lamentarse en el sacrificio" (p. 74). Through magic, the walls of a temple speak, and one of the gods, Guacamayo, is spewed out from the bowels of the earth in a volcanic eruption. Similarly, in "Cuculcán", la Abuela de los Remiendos ascends and descends from the sky, and invisible characters such as Ralabal, the wind, participate in the drama. In addition to these general magical events the plot is based on other supernatural deeds, such as the way in which, through Guacamayo's sorcery, both the palms of Yaí's hands are converted into mirrors and Cuculcán is driven mad. By the same token, and as if by magic, Chinchibirín revives from an apparently mortal wound to search for his loved one, Yaí, who symbolically emerges from his breast where she was safely lodged all

the time. Finally, stage directions are included with the dialogue to signify that magical events are taking place, so that the total effect is that of conveying the idea that the action in "Cuculcán" belongs to a supernatural or surrealist plane.

In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and in "Cuculcán" therefore supernatural and magical events are numerous because of the basic assumption that both "leyendas" deal entirely with myth. The many supernatural qualities which nature and the animals acquire in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", result from mythical beliefs which have an understanding of natural laws that are different in Guatemala among the adherents of two predominant cultures. These supernatural events are related to the Maya-Quiché religion is so far as, in the Indian mythology, there is the tendency for man to identify his surroundings with the divine. This explanation pertains to some mythical aspects of "Cuculcán", where also, one finds the practice of the equalization of animals, plants and objects, man and the gods. However, "Cuculcán" goes a step further, in that, when compared with "Los brujos de la Tormenta primaveral", it is more essentially a story about the gods, and as such, is deeply committed to myth.

The tendency then on the part of Asturias to employ images of supernatural or surrealist qualities, does not imply mere exploration of magic as a technique for easy effect. On the contrary, it attempts to discover and reveal, from deep within the cultural traditions of his people their conception of the cosmos, which envisages close spiritual associations between man, nature and the gods. To this end, a special role is given to the creative and imaginative processes of literary technique where it assists in portraying folklore, along lines consistent with the folk understanding of natural laws and processes.

The effects attained through magic are in fact achieved on the one hand by the humanization of animals, plants and inanimate objects, and on the other, by the dehumanization of man and his gods. Like the magic techniques recently examined, those of humanization and dehumanization, which we will now discuss, reveal certain animistic elements of the Guatemalan folk religion, while assisting in creating legend by introducing folk religion to the tales. Although the main concern is, at the moment, to focus on style, it must be observed that a preliminary view of the mythic content of the tales is also permitted. Thus, in "Guatemala", at the beginning of the narrative, the forest is given human qualities in order that it might attain legendary proportions: "Los árboles respiran el aliento de las personas" (p. 21) and the trees, which now occupy the sites of the former cities, become identified with their former inhabitants. In "Ahora que me acuerdo", the process of humanization is continued with the elaborate image of the "bosque de árboles humanos" (p. 32). Thereafter, in the section "Leyendas", a similar technique is adopted, of treating nature like a live being, particularly when it is a matter of a violent volcanic eruption. Three of the "leyendas" personify nature in this way. At the beginning of "Leyenda del Volcán", preceding the volcanic eruptions and the chaos of genesis, two mountains are described which flicker their eyelids as a river passes between them. The one "escupió saliva de fuego hasta encender la tierra" (p. 39), and the other "subió al volcán a pelar el cráter con las nubes" (p. 39). In "Leyenda de la Tatuana", a storm develops, in which "el viento azotó las nubes" (p. 50), and El Mercader perishes at the foot of a tree, which, "le tomó con las raices como una mano que recoge una piedra, y le arrojó al abismo" (p. 50). In

"Leyenda del tesoro de Lugar Florido", the timely interference of the oracular volcano in the affairs of men is not the only aspect of its humanity. On the contrary, the fumes which it emits make it appear to breathe, and, as if in fright at the terrible scene of battle, "las islas temblaban en las aguas conmovidas como manos de brujos extendidas hacia el Volcán" (p. 63). Because of this process of intense imagery and the resulting personification, nature assumes human if not divine characteristics, but, it is not always portrayed as terrible and cruel. In the fantasy of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", it is also beautiful, as this example shows:

> llegaba a la costa un río mensajero de las más altas montañas y mandó que los campos florecieran a su paso doce lugares antes, para que entrara a la ciudad vestido de petalos, embriagado de aromas... (p. 75)

In addition to the process of personification, with the river undergoing an equivalent process of deification, it is able to give life and material form to the reflection of La Diosa Invisible de las Palomas de Ausencia. The visual and odiferous images, as well as images from this last example and those from the many examples formerly cited, demonstrate the efforts made by the author, to transform nature from an ordinary commonplace, into a pungent source of legend and a live background for his stories, by exploiting the imagination to produce surroundings full of fantastic images in which the tales evolve. Such processes, regardless of their associations with surrealism, whereby nature is portrayed as a bewitching, dominating element, are also consistent with the treatment of nature in Spanish American Literature.[19]

In "Cuculcán", the same image-creating processes of humanization and dehumanization are employed to enhance the legend, but they exhibit certain variations. The characters are divine, and of necessity

must exhibit supernatural traits. Some of them, Guacamayo and Cuculcán, for instance, are adorned in brightly coloured feathers, and Cuculcán is mounted on stilts, so that like the protagonists of many a folk tale, they continue to confuse animal and human characteristics, qualifying wholly neither as humans, as animals nor as gods. Guacamayo seems to resemble a bird, not only because of his feathered costume, but also because of his constant repetition of bird-like sounds "Cuác, cuác, cuác" (p. 85). Other characters are subjected to similar transformations. Yaí, for example, is referred to as "flor amarilla" or "flecha amarilla" (p. 106), and the animals in the drama, like human or divine characters, are given senseless sounds to repeat for the sake of their rhythmic and onomatopoeic effect. Thus, the Tortolitas are made to repeat the sound: "¡Cu-cú! ¡Cu-cú!" (p. 91) and the Coches del Monte: "Jos-jos-jos...sss...cico" (p. 91). Some characters wear masks, and others are considered invisible. The total effect of all this, in combination with the other processes already referred to, being the presentation of all characters with the same or equal qualities, just as in the surrealist image, where the possibility also exists of dehumanizing the human and of humanizing the object. On the other hand, because it is also characteristic of the traditional folk tale to have animal characters, the technique has a double significance for Leyendas de Guatemala, as an exponent of the written folk tale.

The elements of magic, and the processes of dehumanization and personification to which we have just alluded as devices introducing myth to the world of legend and imagination, are also appreciably enhanced by the state of semi-consciousness pervading in Leyendas de Guatemala. In it therefore are to be found images similar to the surrealist image,[20] such as those

experienced in dreams, and during hallucinations caused by drugs or by madness. We have seen, when considering the structure of the work, that dream and the state of semi-consciousness fulfill an important function, to the extent that Leyendas de Guatemala portrays the dream world of Guatemalans. Indeed, one may even go so far as to say that some of the elements of language we have considered in the earlier part of this chapter also pertain to the dream. According to the surrealist interpretation of Freudian theory, in the dream process, there is an intensification of images,[21] that is to say, that an intensified image is produced by the unusual juxtaposition of words, and hence, ideas. The element of dream to which we wish to refer now, however, is a different kind. Here, we will consider the kind of image experienced in a dream, when the action seems to take place in a twilight zone, or when images appear vague and indefinite, as in a scene under water, or in a setting blurred by distance, smoke or mist. The device is aptly suited to Asturias' purpose of producing the folk tale in written form, for indeed, the stories often assume the qualities of a vague recollection of the past.

Numerous examples of this kind of image, are to be found in "Guatemala", where virtually everything narrated about the history of Guatemala appears to take place in a dream. Thus, within the imaginary city, created by none less than El Cuco de los Sueños, "por las escaleras suben imágenes de sueño sin dejar huella, sin hacer ruido" (p. 22). The religious experience of Cuero de Oro occurs in the dim light of a very thick forest, a fact stressed by the repetition of "Noche delirante", and by frequent references to "la oscuridad" (pp. 31 - 33). The quality of dream is equally apparent in "Leyenda del Cadejo", where the novice Elvira de San Francisco, in a dreamy state, "unía su espíritu y

su carne a la casa de su infancia" (pp.42 - 43) and encounters "muros reflejados en el agua de las pilas a manera de huelgo en vidrio limpio" (p. 43). Moreover, her day-dreaming takes place under cover of darkness: "Oscurecía. Las sombras borraban su pensamiento" (p. 43). In this setting, the images presented are those of a young girl, yielding for a moment to fantasy and illusion after being enclosed behind the walls of a convent since her adolescence. In this regard, a Freudian analysis of her dreams would interpret her long lock of hair as the symbol of her sexuality which she must suppress, but the loss of which causes her private anxieties.[22] In "Leyenda de la Tatuana", a dream effect is to be found in the retenue of servants, accompanying El Mercader and his beloved slave girl, "como las figuras de un sueño" (p. 50). The same vague dream-like effect is portrayed in the image of a busy market from "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido" where the barter, as in a dream, takes place in a noiseless vacuum:

> Era un mercado, flotante de gente dormida, que parecía comprar y vender soñando. El cacao, moneda vegetal, pasaba de mano a mano sin ruido, entre nudos de barcas y de hombres. (p. 59)

Then, another example from "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" contains many images, with qualities such as silence once again, clairvoyance, and weightlessness, that are characteristic of the dream:

> ..Ni un eco, Ni un sonido. Sueño vidrioso de lo que carece de sueño, del cuarzo, de la piedra pómez más ligera que el agua, del mármol insomne bajo sábanas de tierra. (p. 69)

Earlier in this "leyenda" Juan and Juana Poyé are described as they are just waking from sleep: "La Poyé despertó a los enviones de su marido" (p. 68). Then, the repetition throughout of the sentence, "si sería parte de su sueño" (p. 68), is a persistent suggestion that the images

from this supernatural world belong to a dream. Then, towards the end of the story, all of the cities in which the previous events took place fade away as in the awakening from a dream:

> Poco a poco, perdida su consistencia [la ciudad] ablandándose como un sueño y se deshizo en el agua, igual que las primitivas ciudades de reflejos. (p. 80)

When the stories are presented within the framework of images of this sort, they are again given the appearance of recollections from the past which indeed helps to identify them with the written folk tale, and with legend.

Once again, by establishing the events of the stories as the result of a dream, Asturias lays the groundwork for the general acceptance of the myth they contain. For, in the dream, the subconscious is revealed and man's mythic beliefs are exposed, even enacted, with the dreamer himself being the chief performer.[23] Consequently, the technique of narrating the stories of "Leyendas" of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and of "Cuculcán" as the dreams, visions and revelations of the subconscious of the protagonists of Leyendas de Guatemala is a valid means of capturing their myths and of introducing their supernatural beliefs into the tales as truth.

Hallucinations from drugs and from madness simulate the semi-conscious state which is the realm of the dream-like surrealist image, and furnish a natural background for fantastic tales. Like the dream technique, this also accomplishes the author's purpose in that it helps to explore the nature of myth, portraying it as an expression of subconscious beliefs, and introducing it into the legends through channels that are universally recognized. Just as with dream, the literary devices for simulating hallucinations create a framework within which

the fantasy becomes acceptable, and suggest a vagueness which implies that these are legends, distant events recalled to memory. The implication that the myths, and scenes of the legendary cities in the first "leyenda" "Guatemala" are evoked through a state of drug-induced hallucinations introduces the concept from the very beginning:

> Para señalar su primera huella se enterraron envoltorios de tres dieces de plumas y tres dieces de canutos de oro en polvo junto a la yerba-mala .... (p. 21)

"Ahora que me acuerdo" also contains the idea of the use of drugs to induce visions of a legendary world and of a strangely mixed myth of a Catholic and Indian God. Niña Tina confesses that use of the drug "chipilin" has deprived her of a sense of time, and Don Chepe describes himself as being in the same condition when he speaks of having attained "el estado de la transparencia" (p. 29). Equally implied is that this was also the state of mind of the narrator, Cuero de Oro, especially since he complains that "en la sombra del bosque, me burlan los sentidos" (p. 31). After this statement, his narration is teeming with hallucinatory images such as: "el bosque se convierte en una masa maleable" (p. 31), and "numerosas generaciones de hombres se arrancaron la piel para enfundar la selva" (p. 32). Then, his narration assumes more of an oral character as it imitates the utterings of the victims of hallucinations; sometimes the words are senseless, and sometimes they make just enough sense to expose his alternating sensations of depression and euphoria: "¡A-e-i-ou! más ligero .... criiii .... criiii" (p. 32). One minute he wants his arms torn apart, until he is divided in two, and the next he feels as though he is God.

Similar hallucinatory experiences are continued in the section "Leyendas". The friar of "Leyenda del Sombrerón" is an eccentric:

> Entre los unos, sabios y filósofos, y los otros, artistas y locos, habia uno a quien llamaban a secas el Monje, por su celo religioso y santo temor de Dios y porque se negaba a tomar parte en las discusiones de aquellos y en los pasatiempos de estos, juzgándoles a todos victimas del demonio. (p. 54)

The fantastic images of his experience are therefore the interpretations of a demented mind. Consequently, the bouncing of the "pelota" is a source of great joy, but when it stops, and lies "como un pajarito muerto" (p. 54), he is saddened. As a further evidence of his mental condition, he suffers from tremors and palpitations, then becomes over-excited and wants to jump around like the ball. The magical conversion of the "pelota" into a large hat, indeed the whole legend, is, then, an illusion created by this demented mind; but the creation is made possible because the suggestion of dementia reaches down to the subconscious mind of the monk and exposes his sacred beliefs about gods and demons, causing him to see in the "pelota" and its owner, an image of the devil.

Elsewhere in this section of Leyendas de Guatemala, there is another suggestion of the state of hallucination in the mind of El Maestro Almendro. Among the objects of limitless value he offers in his attempt to retrieve his lost soul is marijuana for the pipe of El Mercader-de-joyas-sin-precio. This fact becomes significant when it is later discovered that "una hebra de tabaco separaba la realidad del sueño" (p. 49), suggesting the attainment of a state of altered consciousness with the use of marijuana. From then on, the actions of El Maestro are indeed those of a drugged man:

> ... deambulaba como loco por las calles, asustando a los niños, recogiendo basuras y dirigiéndose de palabra a los asnos, a los bueyes y a los perros sin dueño, que para él formaban con el hombre la colección de bestias de mirada triste. (p. 50)

In this "leyenda" as with the other examples, the device assists in

introducing myth into the story, for, it is only after he has been in this condition that he effects a magical escape from prison, and so gives to the legend its supernatural or religious characteristics.

The drama "Cuculcán" does not depend to a great extent upon hallucination for the introduction of its myth, for myth is already firmly entrenched since the characters are mythological figures. Nonetheless, the effects here are essentially similar to those in the other stories. Hallucinations created by drugs assist Guacamayo in seeing things as they are. After admitting to being drunk: "¡Tomé chicha para aliviarme el dolor de dientes y estoy atarantado!" (p. 95), Guacamayo argues in favour of the special insight which this semi-conscious state gives. "Cuando está borracho, ve las cosas como son..." (p. 96), and it is while he is in this state that he is most vociferous in casting doubts on everything, and actually succeeds in demonstrating that this mythical world is an illusion.

It is appropriate that our discussion of some of the aspects of style employed by Miguel Angel Asturias in his creation of a world of legend and imagination should end with the notion of illusion, since implicitly, the author is presenting a world that is distorted and transformed into legend by the various devices mentioned. The process of legend creation, as examined earlier in this chapter, involves the use of various pre-Columbian literary techniques, either to invent daring word images with which the subject is adorned and transformed, or else to retain as much of the oral tradition as possible in the written tale. Later on, techniques related to the automatic composition of the surrealists appear to re-enforce and emphasize the oral tradition of legend, while various other surrealist devices are able to introduce the

religious and supernatural dimension, a major characteristic of legend. These events are experienced in an altered state of consciousness, induced by various means such as a simulation of dreams, of madness or of a drugged state, which make them more acceptable to the reader. On the one hand, in "Guatemala", "Ahora que me acuerdo", and the "Leyendas", these aspects of style were employed to give an air of legend to principally historical subjects, while on the other hand, in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán", the same devices were used to sustain the description of a primordial world of myth. It was, moreover, equally appropriate of A.J. Castelpoggi to have classified Asturias' style as "indigenous surrealism",[24] appropriate because the style, as we have seen, is an echo of indigenous pre-Columbian literature, and yet is entirely in keeping with the ideals and practice of the adherents of surrealism, with whom Asturias was acquainted at the time of his conception of "Leyendas de Guatemala". Indeed, we could well apply the following to Asturias' style, whereby Anna Balakian summarizes the value and effects of the surrealist image as:

> an enrichment of the active vocabulary of poetry, a release from verbal inhibitions, a selection of word association beyond the barriers set up by logic, a new metaphor built upon those incongrous word groupings, and the images resulting from the association of one metaphor with another--which one might call the square of the metaphor.[25]

When we understand that, in addition to obtaining such poetic effects in Leyendas de Guatemala, Asturias was also able to explore and give a very vibrant description of Guatemalan mythology, as will be shown in the ensuing chapter, we will be able to measure more completely the value of his "indigenous surrealism".

NOTES

[1] The magical and even divine power of words and poetry stems from the fact that American drama had its beginnings in sacred festivals. Then, in the indigenous tongues, poetry which was understood metaphorically as "flower-and-song" was one of the means by which the Supreme Giver of Life could be evoked. See Miguel León-Portilla, Precolumbian Literatures (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), pp. 76 - 115.

[2] Anna Balakian, Literary Origins of Surrealism: A new mysticism in French poetry (New York: Kings Crown Press, 1947), pp. 6-8.

[3] Giuseppe Bellini, La narrativa de Miguel Angel Asturias, translation by Ignacio Soriano (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1969) pp. 20-31.

[4] See Angel María Garibay Kintana, Historia de la literatura nahuatl, I, 1430-1521 (México: Editorial Porrua, S.A., 1953), also León-Portilla, Pre-Columbian Literatures, ed. cit.

[5] Luis Harss, Los nuestros, Colección Perspectivas (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1966), pp. 105-106.

[6] Garibay Kintana, Literatura nahuatl, I, ed. cit., pp. 19 and 67.

[7] This is a quotation from the Asturias and González de Mendoza translation of the Popol Vuh. See Popol Vuh o Libro del consejo de los Indios Quichés (2nd ed., Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S.A., 1969), pp. 94-95.

[8] See León-Portilla, Pre-Columbian Literatures, ed. cit., p. 77; and Garibay Kintana, Literatura nahuatl, I, ed. cit., p. 72.

[9] Miguel Angel Asturias: Lo ancestral en su obra literaria (New York: Eliseo Torres and Sons, 1972), pp. 48-52; and also Garibay Kintana, Literatura nahuatl, I, p. 65.

[10] This is one of the three mythical settlements, the "Lieu de l'Abondance", "Lieu de l'Aube", and "Lieu des Cavernes", identified by Raynaud (Livre du Conseil, ed. cit., p. ii).

[11] Garibay Kintana, Literatura nahuatl, Vol. I, p. 75.

[12] Music, song, and dance, in which rhythm predominates, are given as general aspects of Nahuatl poetry. See Angel María Garibay Kintana, Panorama literario de los pueblos nahuas (Mexico: Editorial Porrua S.A., 1971), p. 28.

[13] See U.K. Jones, Behind American Footlights (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1966).

[14] Cid Pérez and Martí de Cid, Teatro indio, p. 348.

[15] Bellini, La narrativa de Miguel Angel Asturias, p. 21.

[16] Anna Balakian, Surrealism, the Road to the Absolute (Revised edition; New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 176.

[17] Ibid., pp. 176-190. The discussion on dehumanization in Balakian includes an illustration of the painting to which we refer called "Primacy of Matter over Thought" by Man Ray, 1931.

[18] See Dorothy M. Rhoads, The Bright Feather and other Maya Tales (New York: Doubleday, 1932).

[19] Henríquez Ureña, Literary Currents, p. 129.

[20] See Balakian, Surrealism, p. 144.

[21] Ibid, pp. 125-128.

[22] See Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, Translated and edited by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1955), pp. 491-498.

[23] Ibid., pp. 550-556.

[24] Miguel Angel Asturias (Buenos Aires: Editorial "La Madrágora", 1961), p. 36.

[25] Balakian, Surrealism, p. 165.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD OF MYTH

In beginning the discussion of myth, it is necessary to review certain key points from the previous chapters, whose importance now becomes especially relevant. The term "myth", as defined in our Introduction, refers to ancient and primitive beliefs about religious and supernatural phenomena, beliefs about the creation of the world, the physical environment, and climate, the struggle between good and evil, and the destiny of man. These beliefs constitute a true and sacred history to their adherents. In our first chapter, when we distinguished between the role of legend and myth, we also indicated the unity of Leyendas de Guatemala based on a common approach to such themes as time and dream throughout the apparently disjointed sections. It was shown then that the normal concept of time had become invalid in the various stories. Related to this view of time was the general dream framework within which all of the stories were encased. Our second chapter, while exploring legend more fully, concentrated on various images and on literary devices used to introduce myths into the stories. In its latter half especially, we examined images which depended for their effect on being located within the framework of an altered state of consciousness. Thus, magic, the dream state, and other manifestations of the subconscious were frequently used by Asturias as a vehicle for presenting his images. Because of the vital role played by dream, according to our previous analysis, it is now relevant to indicate a general theory, already accepted, that dream is a valid indicator of culture. This idea is explored in Dreams in Primitive Cultures, which concludes that dreams "reflect the different supernatural or religious traditions of specific cultures".[1] Insofar as in our previous

chapters we have shown that the stories of the "Leyendas", of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", and of "Cuculcán" are introduced as the dreams of the local inhabitants, they can be regarded as reflecting the religious traditions or the myths of that specific culture.

The world of myth is an intrinsic part of the world of legend and imagination, and, as such, is largely responsible for the religious and supernatural aspects of the legends. In the stories, myths often occur in various forms; sometimes they feature as a series of isolated sacred stories, forming the nucleus of one legend as in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral"; and sometimes they appear singly as one central myth to the whole legend as in "Ahora que me acuerdo". Very frequently, however, the myths are incorporated more indirectly into the text through references to such things as colours, animals, or seemingly insignificant objects which acquire a significant meaning only when they are associated with the mythology to which they allude. Consequently in this chapter, the principal myths from all the stories will be selected and analyzed, separate from the world of legend and imagination within which they are encased. In this way, a fuller appreciation of Leyendas de Guatemala will be facilitated as the mythical beliefs involved are outlined. Several implications will arise out of our examination of the presentation of myth in Leyendas de Guatemala, including one of our main concerns, that is, further insight into the nature and function of myth. Secondly, by exposing the inner beliefs of successive generations of indigenous Guatemalans, and by revealing the process by which myth is transferred to succeeding generations, this analysis offers a specific example of the universal problem of the selection or rejection of foreign beliefs by subjected peoples.

Our approach to myth can be clarified further by considering certain aspects of the two introductory "leyendas", "Guatemala" and "Ahora que me acuerdo" where from the beginning of Leyendas de Guatemala, Asturias accustomed the reader to encounter a consistent juxtapositioning of different historical periods. The idea was presented in the story "Guatemala" through the metaphor of history as a multi-storied structure, in which it is as easy to pass from one period of history to another, as it is to open a door and step from one room to another. In "Ahora que me acuerdo", Asturias introduced another notion, that of the possibility of recreating, in the present, an event from the mythical past. Cuero de Oro's experience is that of a return journey through time, but, in effect, time has been suspended, as is indicated when his narrative commences:

> . . . ahora que me acuerdo, estaban como están y tenían cien años. Son eternos. Son el alma sin edad de las piedras y la tierra sin vejez de los campos. (p. 29)

In fact, what we have in these two stories are two complementary ideas that historical periods exist in continuous juxtaposition within a single structure, and that the time of myth is an eternal present.

With these two ideas, Asturias has created a situation in keeping with Jungian myth analysis and theories on the collective unconscious, and universal archetypes. Regardless of the passage of time, the different periods of history are housed in a common edifice, to be inherited by successive generations, who may look upon it as their own, with special significance for the time in which they live. In short, one generation accepts the traditions and beliefs of preceding ones, thus keeping the mythic archetypes alive, changing only aspects of their external form.[2] A consideration of aspects of the five stories told in the section "Leyendas" will reveal that Asturias' world of myth in Leyendas

de Guatemala exists in part as a result of that process, and that what he sought to do was to identify and describe the manifestation of several of the mythic archetypes of his country's culture. In order to achieve this end, the process adopted was that of juxtapositioning in the same story, events and ideas pertaining to both the pre-Columbian period and the post-Conquest era.

The basis of the first of the stories "Leyenda del Volcán" is a Mayan creation myth, but the myth is juxtaposed with elements of Christianity. The identification of the story, of which the central character is Nido, with the creation myth, may be substantiated by the presence of certain significant details which are corroborated in other versions of the same myth. In Los anales de los Xahil, for example, there is a reference to the Quiché people as having originated "de allende el mar" in "El Lugar de la Abundancia".[3] In the Mayan account of the creation given by Francisco Ximénez, one of the first Spaniards to record Mayan religious beliefs, there is a confirmation of the belief that water was considered as the source of being:

> Lo primero que se nos ofrece tratar es que antes de la creación no habían hombres ni animales . . . no había cosa en orden, cosa que tuviese ser, sino es el mar, y el agua que estaba en calma y así todo estaba en silencio y oscuridad, como noche, solamente estaba el Señor y Creador Culebra fuerte Madre y Padre de todo lo que hay en el agua estaba en una suma claridad adornado y oculto.[4]

In the narrative of the myth in "Leyenda del Volcán", "los tres que venían en el agua" look at "Los tres que venían en el viento" and muse:

> —¡Son nuestras máscaras, tras ellas se ocultan nuestras caras! ¡Son nuestros dobles, con ellos nos podemos disfrazar! ¡Son nuestra madre, nuestro padre, Monte en un Ave, que matamos para ganar la tierra! ¡Nuestro nahual! (p. 38)

They reveal their aquatic origin and also refer to the Maya-Quiché belief in the nahual, a guardian spirit, usually a double, which each person possesses, and which, as is still believed in Guatemala today, takes the form of an animal.[5] Belief in the nahual stems from the idea of duality which pervades the Mayan pantheon, an idea apparent in "Leyenda del Volcán", where there is reference to "Monte en un Ave" as both mother and father. This person appears to represent the Mayan creator gods who assume many forms as both the Popol Vuh and Ximénez reveal:

> Se criaron todas las criaturas y se manifestó la creación de los palos de vida y todo lo demás que se crió por el Corazón del Cielo que se llamaba Cahuuracán. El primero Caculhuhuracán (esto es rayo de una pierna) el segundo se llamaba Chipicaculha es el más Pequeño de los rayos y el tercero se llamaba Raxacasulha (esto es rayo muy hermoso) y así son tres aquel Corazón del Cielo; viniendo con Tepeu y Cucumatz se consultó entre ellos acerca de la vida y creación . . .[6]

In addition to these similarities with other accounts of the creation story, further points of contact are established through the description of the chaos of the natural elements, and the implications of the magical power of the word, both of which are to be found in the Popol Vuh.[7] Thus, in "Leyenda del Volcán", when all of Nido's companions have been destroyed in the volcanic eruptions, the earthquake and the hurricane, he alone survives, because he has received life as if by magic when he is named.

In the initial part of "Leyenda del Volcán", through the story of Nido and his companions, it is the world of pre-Columbian mythology which predominates. The story culminates, however, with Nido's vision of a Christian Saint, bearing a lily and a child, an analogy with St. Joseph and the Christ Child. It is as if the beliefs of indigenous pre-Columbian

Guatemalans are incorporated into the Christian beliefs of Colonial Guatemala, the mythology of the present (pp. 1067-1068). As we examine the remaining "leyendas", we shall see that this is a consistent characteristic.

Included among the myths in the "Leyendas" are several concerning the origin and form of the Guatemalan version of the demon, "el duende", with two of its manifestations, "el Sombrerón", and "el Cadejo" explicitly described.[8] This malevolent demon figure is a universal archetype (see above, note 8). What Asturias has done in his stories is to have described several versions of its manifestation in Colonial Guatemala. The pervading ideology in his narrative is that of the Christian demon, reflecting christianized Guatemala, but the figure is also endowed with characteristics derived from the ideology of the pre-Conquest period. The combination of these two elements reflects not only the tendency of Christian colonizers to identify the Mayan gods with their demon, but also the persistence with which, in the form of archetypes, old ideas and beliefs survive.

In "Leyenda del Cadejo", the word "cadejo" refers to the plaited lock of hair of the novice,[9] in which was symbolized, in Freudian terms, as was explained in Chapter II, the last vestige of her sexuality. Symbolized as such, her lock of hair may be seen as a source of temptation from whence stems its connection with the demon, or with evil. "Leyenda del Cadejo", then, seen in this way, gives us a version of the demon myth projected as a subconscious fear. Madre Elvira cuts off her plait to get rid of temptation and the plait changes into a serpent, a demonic form, to be returned to hell by the "hombre-adormidera", who has also become a demonic figure, since he too is a source of temptation.

In "Leyenda de la Tatuana", the combination of pre-Columbian and

post-Conquest mythology is more evident. A Mayan priest is exhumed from his historical period, and is placed in a Colonial setting where he reveals some of the mythical beliefs of Mayan civilization which prevailed in Colonial society. Specifically, we find another version of the demon, references to the four mythical Bacabs, and a story concerning the goddess Chimalmat all intermingled in the same "leyenda". The peregrination through the countryside of El Maestro Almendro as an eccentric, or as a mad sorcerer who speaks to animals and is perpetually seeking something no one understands, reveals him to be a manifestation of the demon of Colonial Guatemala, "el duende" (see above, note 8). The division of his soul into four to undertake a journey in the four cardinal directions is a reference to the belief in a once specific group of Mayan gods, the four Bacabs who supported the sky on their shoulders, one of them at each of the four cardinal points, and each represented by a particular colour. We shall have more to say about the Bacabs later in this chapter, but, for the moment, it may be mentioned that belief in them underscores the importance of the figure four in Mayan cosmography. In addition to the two myths already alluded to in connection with the story of El Maestro, there is a third inspired by his magical escape from prison. The source is the Quiché belief in the goddess Chimalmat who, upon becoming invisible by means of a magical tattoo, could consequently help condemned prisoners escape.[10]

The essential myth of "Leyenda del Sombrerón" is very similar to that of "Leyenda del Cadejo". The "Sombrerón" is another version of the demon, this time in the figure of a dwarf wearing a very large hat, as if to emphasize the idea of disproportion. The principal element of this particular version of the myth, however, is the "pelota". The

"pelota" itself is very suggestive of indigenous myths, since the ball-game was a favourite, not only with pre-Columbian Guatemalans, but also with their gods. Moreover, the movement of the ball about the court was considered an act emulating the actions of the gods.[11] The "pelota", then, is to be very closely identified with the Mayan gods. In "Leyenda del Sombrerón", on the other hand, the "pelota" is identified with Satan. It is as if the Mayan gods continued to survive in the Colonial period, but, like the universal archetypes, they are identified in different forms. The supernatural beings, revered and held in awe by the Mayans, have become the awesome devil of a Christian monk.

The idea of the continued survival of the Mayan gods is readily illustrated in "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", in which the mythic beliefs are shown to be very much alive at the dawn of the Colonial era. By focusing on sacrificial ceremonies, reference is made to the beliefs from which they derive. There is also evidence of an unshaken faith in the Mayan god Kukulkán, when the chief and leader of the army which is about to protect the people from danger, is transformed in their minds into this powerful supernatural being because of his continued prominence as a mythical figure. Moreover, with the eruption of the oracular volcano, reminiscent of the Greek myth of the oracle at Delphi, the idea of the involvement of natural forces in the affairs of men is as alive as ever.

The essential idea that we may stress from a consideration of the myths appearing in the "Leyendas" is that of their survival. In other words the predominating historical period of the "Leyendas" is the Colonial period, yet, in spite of the shock of the conquest and the attempts by zealous missionaries to eliminate them, the traditional myths

continue to exist. More than that, they become an intrinsic part of colonial life, like the archetype which continually reappears in different forms, they too survive in different disguises. Both Christian and Maya-Quiché traditions influence each other in a process of transculturation or culture change.[12] The end product is a culture, different from either of the two, but nevertheless, containing aspects of both.

The idea of the continuity of myth, as found in the first two sections of Leyendas de Guatemala, is perhaps no better illustrated than in the final two sections "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán". In these two sections Asturias is more directly concerned with the narration of episodes belonging to Maya-Quiché mythology. A consideration of these two sections will permit us to analyze two aspects of Leyendas de Guatemala. In the first instance, it will allow us to point out the specific pre-Columbian myths with which Asturias was concerned, and in the second, we will be able to demonstrate the way in which myth undergoes a process of evolution, whereby it is assimilated to the level of the subconscious and may subsequently reappear as an archetype in a variety of forms.

In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", the central myth is that of the Mayan creator god Itzam Na, who, in the Mayan pantheon, represented a virtually omnipotent being and, consequently, was a manifestation indicating a tendency towards monotheism. Among the attributes of the god were rain and the harvest.[13] In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", these attributes are found in Juan and his spouse Juana. They are the source of rain:

> Una gota de su inmenso caudal en el vientre de la Juana Poyé engendró las lluvias, de quienes nacieron los ríos navegables. Sus nietos. (p. 71)

Juan Poyé's powers to withhold rain when he is unhappy are indicated by the consequences manifest in the state of the vegetation of the terrain, with plants "acartonados por la sequedad de la atmósfera" (p. 70); and the "frenos de mareas muertas entre dientes de olas congeladas, afiladas, acuchillantes" (p. 70), are undoubtedly references to lagoons created by a fall in the water level of the rivers, caused by seasonal rainfall and unaccustomed drought. The consequences are similar to the droughts and the hot burning sun with which the Mayans were traditionally chastized when they neglected their ceremonies of adoration to Kinich Ahau Itzam Na (see note 13 above).

Further evidence of the identification of Juan Poyé with Itzam Na is to be found in the meaning of the name of the deity and in the physical attributes with which he is traditionally endowed. Itzam Na means "Iguana House", and suggests the Mayan concept of the world as encased within a square whose sides are formed by iguanas.[14] Juan and Juana Poyé and their descendants all belong to this family of reptiles. At the beginning of the story, when Juan Poyé awakes, parts of his body are hidden under leaves. He is "medio soterrado" (p. 67), indicating that his habitat in the forest is any small crevice in the ground. In fact, the dampness, the stagnant water and the mud are the characteristics of the dwelling place of the iguana and of Juan's habitat. Even his movements are those of an iguana:

> cuereó de regreso, mas no pudo remontar sus propias aguas y se ahogó, espumaraje de iguana, después de flotar flojo y helado en la superficie mucho tiempo. (p. 69)

The identification of Juan Poyé with Itzam Na is further substantiated in that, according to the myth, the four sons of Itzam Na, the Bacabs, supported the world on their shoulders at the four cardinal directions.

In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", the descendants of Juan and Juana Poyé are four gods, each dominating in his own settlement, directing the activities of his people.

The survival of this myth is to be found in the colonial legends narrated in the previous section of Leyendas de Guatemala, but there it is remembered only at a superficial level in the special significance that is given to the number four and the magical qualities associated with the directional colours with which each one of the Bacabs is represented. In "Ahora que me acuerdo", there is a clear reference to these colours in the description of Cuero de Oro's journey to the underworld, Xibalbá:

> --Bailando como loco topé el camino negro donde la sombra dice: "¡Camino rey es éste y quien lo siga el rey será!" Allí vide a mi espalda el camino verde, a mi derecha el rojo y a mi izquierda el blanco. Cuatro caminos se cruzan antes de Xibalbá. (p. 32)

A similar reference is made to the directional colours in "Leyenda de la Tatuana":

> Al llenar la luna del Búho-Pescador (nombre de uno de los veinte meses del año de cuatrocientos días), el Maestro Almendro repartió el alma entre los caminos. Cuatro eran los caminos y se marcharon por opuestas direcciones hacia las cuatro extremidades del cielo. La negra extremidad: Noche sortílega. La verde extremidad: Tormenta primaveral. La roja extremidad: Guacamayo o éxtasis de trópico. La blanca extremidad: Promesa de tierras nuevas. Cuatro eran los caminos. . . . (p. 47)

Elsewhere, in "Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", the warriors are grouped together in platoons according to the colour of the feathers which adorn them:

> Los guerreros desfilaban, según el color de sus plumas, en escuadrones de veinte, de cincuenta, y de cien. A un escuadrón de veinte guerreros de vestidos y penachos y vestidos verdes y de cien guerreros de plumas amarillas. (P. 60)

In the war dance which follows, the maidens who participate are four in number.

The whole notion of the survival of myth is, however, perhaps best illustrated by a further reference to the story of Itzam Na and his four sons as told in the narrative concerning Juan Poyé and his descendants. In this instance, it is a reference to the sacredness of the figure nine, and alludes to the deity as a god of rain. One of the descendants of Juan Poyé practises a specific ritual as part of a rain-making ceremony:

> por nueve días antes de abultar la luna, estuvo tomando caldo de nueve gallinas blancas día a día hasta sentirse perfecto. (pp. 73-74)

To this day, there survives among the Chorti Indians of Guatemala, a rain-making ceremony in which the fundamental elements of the ritual are retained.[15]

When we come to the final section of Leyendas de Guatemala, "Cuculcán", we find further evidence to substantiate our contention concerning the continued survival of myth. In this section, the specific subject is the narration of a series of stories from the Mayan mythic past, told in such a way that the idea of the continued evolution of myth is an intrinsic part. Thus, the myths of "Cuculcán" deal with two separate mythic epochs. There are the myths related of events that have already occurred in El Lugar de la Abundancia, and which are referred to by the characters as past events, then, there are those involving the characters whose story is made to unfold in "Cuculcán". At the same time, the myths enacted through the drama "Cuculcán" are precisely among those which reappear as the mythic background to the Colonial legends of the section "Leyendas". The idea then, which we shall be able to stress again, is that the myths survive the passage of time by retreating into

the background with infrequent use, but reappearing periodically in differing forms and contexts.

From the first of the mythic epochs to which we alluded, that of the former world of El Lugar de la Abundancia, are related the events of the revolt of the moon goddess, who describes her cosmological function and responsibility for making the "tortillas" of the gods:

> Un guerrero no morirá, caerá aparentemente muerto bajo la tiniebla del sueño, y de su pecho volverá a salir el espejo amarillo del cielo, el comal redondo en que se cocían al fuego lento de las estrellas, las tortillas de los dioses: amarillas y blancas tortillas hechas de maíz amarillo y blanco, los días, y negras tortillas hechas de maíz negro, las noches. (pp. 128-129)

From the same epoch originates the myth whereby man was obligated to donate a portion of his harvest of maize for the sustenance of the gods, and even to participate in human sacrifice to appease the sun god, whose displeasure would otherwise be felt:

> En el lugar de la Abundancia me ofrecieron mis padres en forma de una flor a Cuculcán y por eso no hubo cosecha mala en sus tierras ni mal de ojo en la casa. (p. 141)

Yaí, who here relates her past life, apparently existed in a different form in that earlier world, suggesting indeed that she is the subject of a dynamic myth which has evolved from one divine generation to another. Chinchibirín also belonged to that former world, and he too confirms the change in Yaí when he pleads for her attention:

> Cuando no eras mujer en el Lugar de la Abundancia, cuando eras agua y contigo mitigué mi sed, cuando eras sombra de pinal y yo el dormido, cuando eras barro de comal para calentar tortillas titilantes. (p. 144)

As if in confirmation of the myths from this earlier world, several of the characters refer to their presence in it. Yaí and Guacamayo,

specifically allude to the same incident, Guacamayo in the following terms:

> Una vez puso su espalda en el río para que cien mujeres en cien días distintos lavaran su ropa, y no tembló un solo día, salvo el día en que llegaste tú a lavar tu huipil de flores de trueno; (p. 159)

Yaí in the following:

> Habría jurado, y ahora me explico, que ese día sentí que las piernas se me iban en el río alargando en carne de burbujas, y que de la cintura para abajo me habían acariciado dos manos grandes de piedra, agua, aire y hierbas de quemado perfume. (p. 159)

The first mythical world described in "Cuculcán", then, existed in El Lugar de la Abundancia giving rise to certain myths about the moon goddess, which would undergo a process of evolution through the drama enacted in "Cuculcán". The central element of Asturias' narrative is the story of a love triangle which, in effect, amounts to the creation of a new myth based on the old. The myth to which we refer, is that of the sun god as the spouse of the moon goddess, a myth which, at the same time, establishes the cosmic role of the sun in sustaining man and the universe. The principal character is Cuculcán whose name is a Castilian adaptation of the all-powerful Mayan sun god Kukulkán (see Asturias' note on Cuculcán, pp. 1062-1063). The identification is to be made, however, not only through the name, but also because Cuculcán compares himself with the sun and because other characters give him the title, while holding him in high esteem and describing his movements as those of the sun across the sky:

> ¡Eres el Sol, acucuác, tu palacio de forma circular, como el palacio del Sol, tiene cielos, tierras, estancias, mares, lagos, jardines para la mañana, para la tarde, para la noche, . . . para la mañana, para la tarde, para la noche! . . . (p. 86)

Indeed, it is this question of the movement of the sun which

becomes the subject of a heated controversy, in the course of which is revealed the whole myth regarding the sun's daily passage across the sky, and his nightly journey through the underworld, thereby creating the sequence of day and night. Guacamayo mocks the myth, giving his own understanding of the sun's movements:

> Sale por este lado del arco, viaja durante la mañana de subida hasta el ojo de colibrí blanco, el diente de maíz que está en el centro del cielo, y de ahí regresa, no sigue adelante, desanda el camino de la tarde para ocultarse por donde aparece. No describe el arco entero. (p. 97)

Whether the arc is completed or not, both sides in the dispute are agreed that Cuculcán represents three aspects of the sun. Dressed in yellow, he is the morning sun; in red, he is the evening sun; and unclothed, indicative of the absence of the sun and of light, he is the night. This depiction of Cuculcán is in full agreement with the myth of the sun god conceived of as a trinity: Itzam Na, representing the rising sun, Kinich Ahau, the midday sun, and Kukulkán the setting sun.[16]

This identification of Cuculcán with the sun god trinity is further supported by references to ceremonies traditionally performed to honour this god. Cuculcán appears mounted on stilts, recalling the stilt dances performed among the Mayans during the ceremonies in veneration of Kinich Ahau.[17] Moreover, the promise of Yaí to Cuculcán by her parents ensured that "no hubo cosecha mala en sus tierras, ni mal de ojo en la casa" (p. 141), which traditionally, as has been seen, was the objective of ceremonies dedicated to Kinich Ahau Itzam Na. All these indications point to the story of "Cuculcán" as one in which the myths concerning the sun become established in the person of Cuculcán, thereby showing the process of myth evolution, and the creation of the Mayan god Kukulkán. The survival of the myth is to be found in "Leyenda del

tesoro del Lugar Florido", where the Indians, threatened by foreign invaders, subconsciously convert their leader into the powerful god Kukulkán whom they now see has come to lead their warriors in their defense.

Having seen certain aspects of the portrayal of the sun god, it is appropriate to consider the depiction of his counter-part, the moon goddess, who, in the person of Yaí, is also identified as the goddess of fertility and women.[18]

Because of the doubts cast by Guacamayo over the fulfillment of her duties as Cuculcán's wife, and because of his further contentions that Cuculcán is deceptive, that love is an illusion, and that womanhood is madness, Yaí is presented as symbolizing the unfortunate state of womanhood, so much so, that she asks rhetorically: "¿Qué soy sino la mueca de la que ríe, de la que llora, de la que piensa?" (p. 155). Her unhappiness with Cuculcán leads her into an adulterous affair with Chinchibirín, thus affiliating her with the licentiousness of the mythical moon goddess.[19] The relationship between Cuculcán and Yaí, namely, the latter's betrothal to Cuculcán at a very early age, is equally suggestive of the ancient sacrificial offering which guaranteed health and good harvests. It is this aspect of the myth which lies behind the references, in earlier sections, in "Guatemala" and the "Leyendas" to sacrificial rituals, and in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", to the rain-making ceremonies in which a sacrificial ritual was observed. In relation to this aspect, we have already referred to the responsibility of the moon goddess, described also as the responsibility of Yaí, for the preparation of the sustenance of the gods. As further confirmation of the relationship between Cuculcán as the sun god and Yaí as the moon

goddess, substantiating to a greater extent the identification of Yaí with the lunar deity, there is the incident of the reflection of Yaí's face, multiplied infinitely in mirrors, which magically appear in her hands. The reference is to her attribute of fertility, and to the traditional stories according to which the face of the moon goddess reflected the light of the sun like a mirror.[20] Other traditional tales, which link Yaí to the moon goddess, also confirm her identity with that deity. At one stage, while the plot of "Cuculcán" unfolds, the moon, broken into many pieces, becomes lodged in the chest of "el Guerrero Amarillo", thus recalling the episode in the Popol Vuh where Hunahpú and Xbalanque, among the lords of the underworld, Xibalbá, cut each other up into pieces. Later on in the story, Yaí rises from the breast of Chinchibirín, and takes the shape of a golden circle suspended against the black curtain of night, thus symbolizing the birth of the moon, just as the former pair subsequently ascend into the sky to form the sun and the moon.[21]

Many of the stories about the young moon goddess symbolize fertility, especially because of her control over rain, one of her attributes. In Mayan mythology, however, fertility and rain-making were also attributed to the older moon goddess, the wife of Itzam Na, Ixchel, also goddess of domestic affairs, of weaving, medicine and of wisdom, because of her age and experience.[22] In "Cuculcán", La Abuela de los Remiendos quite aptly fulfills this function. Her wisdom and experience are revealed when, in mediating the dispute over the motion of the sun, she outwits the mocking Guacamayo at his own game of riddles, and relates her own tales from the distant past. Her knowledge of medicine is respected even by Guacamayo who depends on her skills to relieve his toothache; and her control over rain becomes apparent since the clouds are

her bearers, and she directs Blanco Aporreador de Tambores who is identified with thunder. Finally, at the end of the drama, she appears performing the domestic duty of weaving with which the Mayan goddess is also associated. All the evidence points to Yaí and La Abuela de Los Remiendos as both representing respectively the myths of the young moon goddess, and those of the older moon goddess. The attributes found in their characterization are precisely those found in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" in the actions of Juana Poyé, who, as the wife of Juan Poyé is to be identified with Ixchel, since we have already identified him with Itzam Na. Indeed, in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", her actions reveal those of the fertility goddess and rain-maker:

> Juan Poyé reapareció en sus nietos. Una gota de su inmenso caudal en el vientre de la Juana Poyé engendró las lluvias de quienes nacieron los ríos navegables. Sus nietos. (p. 71)

The dispute which rages throughout "Cuculcán", including the incident of Guacamayo's toothache is derived from several other Mayan myths, many of which reappear in earlier sections of Leyendas de Guatemala. Principally, these are the myths concerning the two characters Chinchibirín and Guacamayo, who seem to be derived from two mythological beings of the Popol Vuh, Hunahpú, and Vucub Caquix, mortal enemies to the extent that the former succeeds in killing the latter under the pretext of curing him of his toothache.[23] Many Mayan stories emphasize the setting of tasks and the asking of test questions in episodes involving Hunahpú and Xbalanque,[24] hence the series of ordeals in the affair between Chinchibirín and Yaí. At the same time, the conclusion of their affair, the emergence of Yaí from the breast of Chinchibirín, may symbolize the mythical stories of the formation of the sun, the moon, and

the stars, in which Hunahpú and his twin, after many triumphant episodes on earth, as narrated in the Popol Vuh, ascend into the heavens (see above, note 21).

The myth of Hunahpú seems to be fragmented by Asturias, who distributes certain aspects of it among many separate characters so that several of them, from different sections of Leyendas de Guatemala appear to have characteristics in common with him. He is to be identified in Juan Poyé, in that both Juan and Hunahpú have only one arm, and the name of one of Juan's descendants, "Christalino Brazo de La Cerbatana" hints at Hunahpú's favourite hunting weapon, the blow-gun.[25] It would not be anomalous for Juan Poyé or his descendants to be identified with more than one figure on account of the multiplicity of the Mayan pantheon, and the frequent duplication of attributes in more than one deity. Thus, Juan Poyé, who possesses attributes of Itzam Na, the primordial sun god, is also to be identified with Hunahpú, who was also a deity of the sun. The point may be made, therefore, that in one person is reflected all the different manifestations of his being that have arisen as the myths have evolved. This point is further substantiated when it is realized that the demon figures in the stories of the section "Leyendas" of Leyendas de Guatemala are also to be identified with Hunahpú. Among them, the identity most easily established is that of El Maestro Almendro whose wanderings, and the importance attached to his arrival at the crossroads, El Camino Negro, El Camino Verde, El Camino Rojo and El Camino Blanco, recall a similar arrival not only by the twins Hunahpú and Xbalanque, but also by their earlier counterparts Hun-Hunahpú and Vucub-Hunahpú.[26]

The myth concerning Guacamayo is, perhaps more easily identi-

fied in the earlier sections of Asturias' work. He appears with the same name in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", and, there, is already associated with volcanic eruptions: "Una erupción volcánica de chochas anunció el aparecimiento de Saliva de Espejo, el Guacamayo" (p. 76). This may be taken as an initial point of identification of Guacamayo with Vucub Caquix, the false god, Ara Macao.[27] This identification readily recalls the description in the Popol Vuh of the constant feud between Hunahpú and his twin Xbalanque on the one hand, and Vucub Caquix and his sons on the other. Pride and ostentation, led Vucub Caquix to dress elaboately in bright clothes and attempt to pass himself off as the sun-god.[28] In "Cuculcán", Guacamayo practices a similar deception, and receives the nickname of El Engañador. He is always adorned in brightly coloured feathers and exposes his evil pride by performing the role of a controversialist. His sly mocking of the other characters is realized with the repetition of the birdlike sound, "Cuác, Cuác", and with riddles, with which he attempts to confuse them. It is the episode concerning his toothache which places beyond doubt the identity of Guacamayo with the mythical Vucub Caquix of the Popol Vuh, in which we read,

> Sacáronle entonces los dientes a Vucub Caquix y en su lugar le pusieron solamente granos de maíz blanco y estos granos de maíz le brillan la boca.[29]

Another of the titles, "Saliva de Espejo", which Guacamayo receives in "Cuculcán" doubtless also originates from this myth.

Having identified the story of Vucub Caquix and his two sons in "Cuculcán", in which facets of the story are enacted, we may now see how the myth survives appearing in a less obvious form in other sections of Leyendas de Guatemala. In "Leyenda del Volcán" there is in fact, an explicit allusion to the two sons of Vucub Caquix, when, by means of the

stylistic technique of humanization, the two mountains Hurakán and Cabrakán seem to come alive to repeat the activity of Zipacná and Cabracán:

> Dos montañas movían los párpados a un paso del río: La que llamaban Cabrakán, montaña capacitada para tronchar una selva entre sus brazos y levantar una ciudad sobre sus hombros, escupió saliva de fuego hasta encender la tierra.
> Y la encendió.
> La que llamaban Hurakán, montaña de nubes, subió al volcán a pelar el cráter con las uñas. (p. 39)

According to the Popol Vuh version of the myth, the sons of Vucub Caquix demonstrate their pride and power by playing with the mountains like toys (see above note 27). This myth, explicitly referred to in "Leyenda del Volcán", and with a brief mention in "Leyenda de la Tatuana" (p. 47), is consequently, also implied in"Leyenda del tesoro del Lugar Florido", where earthquakes and volcanic activity are equally important.

In a similar way, the presence of other characters from "Cuculcán" is implied in other "leyendas". Among them are Blanco Aporreador de Tambores, identified with thunder, and Ralabal, associated with the wind, both high wind and thunder playing an important role in the storms of "Leyenda del Volcán", and "Leyenda de la Tatuana".

These and other cross-references established between "Cuculcán" and the other sections of Leyendas de Guatemala, serve to indicate quite clearly the nature of Asturias' world of myth. In the first instance, it may be established that, in "Cuculcán", Asturias is concerned very immediately with the process of myth creation. To the extent that there are two mythic epochs in the story, seen in references by characters to former existences, Asturias is able to indicate that, with the passage of time, myths do evolve, as for example, the creation of Yaí as a new moon goddess to replace older lunar deities. While the fundamental,

archetypal elements remain the same, they are associated with different persons. In the case of the story in "Cuculcán", the particular aspect of the process enacted is the emergence of the Mayan god Kukulkán, in whom are synthesized several of the stories relating to earlier deities; and the process of his emergence is given that much more immediacy through the use of the dramatic form. Consequently, "Cuculcán" is essentially, the recreation of the myth of Kukulkán.

When we come to consider the role of the other sections of Leyendas de Guatemala, particularly "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and the "Leyendas", we may see that they occupy still later stages in the process of evolution. In "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" the mythic stories function as a background, against which, the action and personalities of the characters in the story are to be explained and understood. In short, the age of Maya-Quiché myth creation has passed, although the myths themselves remain very much alive. In the "Leyendas", however, it is a different matter. The predominating time period, that of Colonial Guatemala, though representing a Christian era, is but a further stage in the evolutionary process when Maya-Quiché myths have receded somewhat and remain distant memories. But as memories, they forever lurk in the mind whence they can be recalled. Hence, in Colonial Guatemala, these myths still survive, and in fact, have had some input in the current religious beliefs, thus explaining the frequent references in Asturias' "Leyendas" about that period, to the myths which occupy a more prominent position in the later sections of his work.

In beginning this chapter we referred to the Jungian theories of myth analysis and of the idea of the archetype. The application of the theories in Asturias' stories may now be understood more clearly,

for, as the reader progresses through his book, he also progresses back through the process of evolution of myth. From the distant memories evoked in the "Leyendas", the reader progresses through "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", where memories are more vivid, to "Cuculcán", in which the creation of the myth is enacted. The effect is that of showing how recollections of myth, and their appearance in new forms in Colonial Guatemala, have their origin in a primordial mythic era.

NOTES

[1] See Jackson Stewart-Lincoln, The dream in Primitive cultures, Introduction by Professor C.G. Seligman, F.R.S. (London: The Cresset Press, 1935), p. 193.

[2] See Carl Gustav Jung, Psychology and Religion, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 63-64. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious tends to oversimplify the very complex process of the survival of myth. One of its weaknesses is the implication that aspects of culture are determined by racial characteristics inherited genetically. For a critical appraisal of Jung's theory see Ruth L. Munroe, Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought (London: Hutchinson Medical Publications Ltd., 1957), pp. 554-557.

[3] Los Anales de los Xahil, a translation with notes by Georges Raynaud, Miguel Angel Asturias and J.M. González de Mendoza, prologue by Francisco Monterde, Biblioteca del Estudiante Universitario (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1946), p. 2.

[4] Fray Francisco Ximénez, Historia de la provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala, prologue by J. Antonio Villacorte C., Biblioteca Goathemala de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, Vol. I (Guatemala: Centro América, 1929), pp. 6-7.

[5] See Correa, El espíritu del mal, p. 42.

[6] Ximénez, Historia . . . p.7.

[7] For the Mayan account of the whole Creation story, see Popol Vuh las antiguas historias del Quiché, translated from the original text with Introduction and Notes by Adrian Recinos, Colección Popular (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960) pp. 23-35.

[8] These different characters are recognized as separate manifestations of the universal figure of the evil-doer, called in Guatemala, "el duende". See Correa, El espíritu del mal, pp. 59-76.

[9] "El Cadejo" has the following meaning related to the idea of long plaited hair: "Parte del cabello muy enredado. Madeja pequeña de hilo o seda. Conjunto de muchos hilos para hacer bolas u otra cosa de pasamanería". See Julio Casares, Diccionario ideológico de la lengua española (2nd ed.; Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, S.A., 1959), Part III, p. 133.

[10] See León-Hill, Miguel Angel Asturias, pp. 51-52.

[11] See Rafael Girard, Los Mayas su civilización - su historia, sus vinculaciones continentales (Mexico: Libro Mex. Editores, 1966), pp. 36-39.

[12] See Bronislaw Malinowski, The Dynamics of Culture Change: An Enquiry into Race Relations in Africa, Phyllis M. Kaberry ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945). From his investigations of culture change in Africa, Malinowski observed that when two alien cultures come into contact, changes occur in both, and a new culture results.

[13] See Diego de Landa, Relación de las cosas de Yucatán, Vol. XVIII, Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaelogy and Ethnology, Harvard University, a translation edited with notes by Alfred M. Tozzer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: George Banda Publishing Company, 1941), pp. 146-147.

[14] John Eric S. Thompson, Maya History and Religion, The Civilization of America Series (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 203-217.

[15] The ceremony to which we refer requires nine female turkeys which must have abstained from sexual intercourse for nine days before the ritual, when they are cooked and eaten. (See Girard, Los Mayas, pp. 71-76).

[16] Daniel G. Brinton, The myths of the New World, "A treatise on the symbolism and mythology of the red race of America" (2nd ed., rev.; New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1876), p. 39.

[17] The dance on stilts was reserved for the god Bacab Con Sicnal, who was reputed to be the best and greatest of the Bacab gods and hence, a manifestation of the sun god. (See Landa, Relación de las cosas, p. 145.)

[18] Thompson, Mayan Religion, pp. 243-244.

[19] Ibid., p. 243.

[20] According to a folklore tale of San Antonio, British Honduras, because X't 'actani, their moon goddess, reflected by night the light from Lord Kin the Sun, thus, impeding sleep among men on earth, one of her eyes was plucked out to reduce the light. See Eric S. Thompson, The Mayans, Anthropological Series Vol. XVII, Nos. 1-41, pub. 241, edited by Berthold Laufer (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1927), p. 132.

[21] One tale refers to the same X't 'actani, wife of Lord Kin the Sun, who in a form of a crab is shattered into many pieces by a thunderbolt. Ibid., p. 128. Another legend relates how the moon was created when Hunahpú and Xbalanque ascended into the sky. (See Popol Vuh, Recinos, ed. cit. pp. 98-102.)

[22] For a more detailed account of Ixchel's role in the Mayan pantheon, see Thompson, Mayan Religion, pp. 206-209.

[23] See Popol Vuh, Recinos, p. 39.

[24] See Thompson, The Mayans, p. 137.

[25] See Popol Vuh, Recinos, pp. 35-36.

[26] In referring to the experiences of Hun-Hunahpú and Vucab-Hunahpú in the underworld, the Popol Vuh narrates how they, like El Maestro Almendro, encounter crossroads: "De estos cuatro caminos, uno era rojo, otro negro, otro blanco y otro amarillo" (Recinos, p. 54). The twins Hunahpú and Xbalanque in their episodes in Xibalbá also have similar experiences (Ibid., pp. 79-80).

[27] See Popol Vuh, Raynaud, p. xx.

[28] Vucub Caquix and his two sons show their power by playing with the mountains. See Popol Vuh, Recinos, pp. 33-35.

[29] Ibid., p. 38.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding study of Miguel Angel Asturias' Leyendas de Guatemala, we have undertaken an analysis of the work which has not previously been attempted in critical literature. Our intention was to demonstrate some of the techniques employed by Asturias in writing a work of creative literature which had the traditions of his native country as its principal subject. Our conclusions, therefore, should permit us both to assess the artistic merit of his work and, at the same time, to evaluate his interest in the indigenous culture of Guatemala.

The study began with a consideration of the structure of Leyendas de Guatemala with the principal purpose of determining the nature and function of legend and myth. In doing so, an overall view of the text was obtained, its artistic structure was revealed and a direction given to our ensuing discussions by establishing the general relationships existing between legend and myth. Moreover, our examination of the structure permitted a view of the techniques employed by Asturias in writing Leyendas de Guatemala as a unified work, regardless of the different stages of its composition and publication. The cohesion found was due to the very specific connectives obtained through a single subject matter and its treatment in the different sections of his work. First, the subject was established as Guatemala's history and traditions: its legendary history and its sacred history. Secondly, we identified the treatment of time and dream as the main devices used in a uniform presentation of the subject. To this end, both devices permitted a constant link with the past. The reversal of time and the juxtaposing, within the same story, of events vastly separated by time, were techniques of composition through which Asturias maintained the interest

in Guatemalan history and its indigenous religious beliefs. Then, he used dreams to provide an outlet for revealing history, suppressed wishes, religious traditions and myth, when the subconscious was uncovered. Legend and myth were, therefore, identified as the principal aspects of that past, and these were examined subsequently in separate chapters.

Our second chapter, in discussing legend, continued to show the deep respect Miguel Angel Asturias had for the traditions of his country, by examining the great influence on his style of literary techniques associated with pre-Columbian Guatemala. The influence of European surrealism was also discussed and again it was revealed that essentially those devices had the effect of establishing a framework for accomodating myth. The two divergent influences were merged to create Asturias' own unique style and moulded to the author's purpose of representing the oral traditions of indigenous folk tales in written form. The devices of style related to pre-Columbian sources emphasized various forms of repetition and the creation of images through the magical power of unusual word associations. From all sections of the text it was possible to select various passages which emulated the literature derived from ancient Middle America, including direct quotations from the Popol Vuh. Through techniques akin to those of surrealism, images, and indeed whole episodes, were presented within the context of a state of altered consciousness. Dream and hallucinatory images, therefore, were portrayed with changes from the conscious to the sub-conscious, thus resulting in a magical transformation of the subject matter. The chapter on legend and imagination, therefore, resulted in two conclusions. First of all, it showed how Asturias held up for emulation various literary

techniques associated with the ancient traditions of Middle America. Secondly, it revealed Asturias' influence by European surrealism which he used as a medium for introducing traditional folklore into his stories.

Although it was not the main topic discussed in the chapter on legend and imagination, myth still attracted a great deal of attention because it was seen to participate in the modification process whereby history was idealized and transformed into legend. As we also saw, the process of creating legend consisted of various attempts to incorporate mythic beliefs into history. In short, myth, as the subject of legend, received attention in its own right; then, where history was the subject, once again, myth was involved in its transformation. The overview of Leyendas de Guatemala, therefore, revolves around the discussions on myth, since myth appears to be one of the principal, if not the core element of content in the book.

Two objectives were realized from the analysis in the chapter on myth. First of all, a clarification of the meaning of many of the stories was achieved when we selected and described the various religious and supernatural beliefs which form an integral part of Leyendas de Guatemala. Because the subject of all of the stories was generally history and myth, a clarification of the references to mythology completed the analysis of content, since we had already explained the historical allusions of the legends in our first chapter. Then secondly, it was possible to reconstruct Asturias' view of Guatemala's cultural history, when an evolutionary process was traced whereby the myths were altered from one section of the text to the other, like Jungian archetypes of cultural change. The principal myth was found to be that of the Mayan sun god traced backwards through time. In the Colonial setting of the

"Leyendas", he was recognized only as a christianized demon, El Cadejo, or El Sombrerón. At an intermediary stage, in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", before the discovery of America and the effects of European influences on Maya-Quiché myth, the sun god is seen as Itzam Na with his wife Ixchel, virtually omnipotent creator gods, responsible for sunlight, rain and good harvests, and with the reputation of having engendered four sons, the Bacabs, who support the sky on their shoulders. Finally, "Cuculcán", dealing with the origins of Maya-Quiché mythic traditions, represents an age of myth creation and portrays the sun god in his youthful days, courting the moon goddess.

Indeed, an overview of the portrayal of myth throughout Leyendas de Guatemala is an amplification of the mythical experiences of Cuero de Oro in his vision of time reversal in "Ahora que me acuerdo". The involvement with myth appears to increase as one progresses from one section of the text to the other. Thus, one is left with the impression of being drawn farther and farther back into the country's mythical past, as the relatively recent colonial myths of "Leyendas" give way to the pre-Columbian myths of "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral", which lead into the highly illusory mythical world of the gods in "Cuculcán". By tracing backwards the various changes in the myth of the Christian demon to the revered Maya-Quiché sun god Kukulkán, Asturias seems to be first assessing in "Leyendas" the mixed philosophies in the culture of Colonial Guatemala. Then in "Los brujos de la tormenta primaveral" and "Cuculcán", he pointedly presents the indigenous roots of that culture.

In assessing the overall artistic achievement and the cultural contribution of Leyendas de Guatemala, we must relate its value to its impact on Guatemalan society. In the first instance, the work has a

complex artistic unity. One might even go so far as to say that it is deliberately complex. Then, on account of the use in it of juxtapositioning and alteration, and hence, because of its overall pyramidal structure, we suggest that it is esoterically Mayan, embodying both the Mayan love of the puzzle, and the design of the Mayan pyramids, elements which are symbolic of the very core of pre-Columbian civilization in Guatemala. For all this however, the work is both artistically and culturally a combination of the Old World and the New. The combination of literary elements derived both from pre-Columbian techniques, and from modern surrealism is symtomatic of the emergence of a literature derived from the exploitation of the most original in both worlds. However, since in the past, it was customary in Guatemala for both European culture and art-forms to be more acceptable than the indigenous, the implementation of a trend which demonstrates the value of the indigenous culture and its implicit forms of art opposes that custom. Moreover, this literature Asturias' "indigenous surrealism", with the emphasis placed in it on Maya-Quiché myth and on Guatemala's own history and environment, is a clear demonstration that Spanish American authors need not rely on techniques and subjects originating from Europe. On the contrary, the Spanish American author is able, as was Asturias, to emerge as an innovator in his own right, to exploit his own modes of expression, and to look to his own history and traditions, hitherto often neglected or Europeanized, as a fitting subject for a rich and creative literature.

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